the weekly Standard

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THE END OF MARRIAGE IN SCANDINAVIA
STANLEY KURTZ

Flying High . . . and Sinking Fast

Reports on the Democratic presidential parade

FRED BARNES
ANDREW FERGUSON
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Jeannie Hyun Diefenderfer
Vice President of Verizon Network Services and Board President of The International Center in New York

A US immigrant at the age of 13, Jeannie understands the difficulties of moving to a new country. Her own experiences motivated her to become a volunteer at The International Center in New York, helping fresh immigrants face the challenges of a brand new life with courage and confidence.

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Clark Blindsided by Baptists

On Monday, January 19, while everyone else was staring the other way—at the Iowa caucuses, to be precise—an amusing and unjustly neglected event played itself out in South Carolina, which holds a primary of its own February 3. Wesley Clark came to Columbia, the state capital, to celebrate Martin Luther King Day, appearing first at a prayer service at the Zion Baptist Church, then addressing a crowd on the statehouse grounds. Clark's speech was nothing much ("Dr. King! Dr. Martin Luther King. Happy Birthday to you, sir!" was the climax), but the prayer service was a doozy.

Guest preacher was an "evangelist anointed by Our Lord"—Dr. Sheila B. Koger, formidable pastor of Columbia's Bethlehem Baptist Church, who favors white satin robes, complete with surplice, and emphatic earrings. With Wes Clark sitting in the second row among a line of elected officials, Dr. Koger began her sermon with a conventional tribute to King, then took an unexpected turn.

"Everyone says these days, 'Give me rights,'" Dr. Koger said. "'Give the gay people rights,' they say." Dr. Koger's voice rose: "But the Lord God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve. If you're a man, then be a man, not a woman!" Half of the congregation was on its feet before too long, shouting approval.

"Now if you're not sure which you are, you can just ask yourself a simple question: 'Do I have a womb?' If you ain't got a womb, then you're a man. And you better act like one."

There were multiple shouts of "Tell it!"

"They told me I could preach the Gospel unadulterated, so that's God's word, not mine," Dr. Koger went on. "He is a God of decency and order, and he ain't going to bless no mess!"

At the start of Dr. Koger's sermon Clark set his face in the rictal smile that is traditional for white politicians who find themselves in black churches. But as she took her detour into gay marriage the candidate turned to a man next to him and appeared to make small talk—*here I am, just another four-star general trying to mind my own business. . . .*

Later in the morning he made a point to tell reporters that "he didn't support those views." Indeed, he said, he opposes discrimination of all kinds. And don't we all? But suddenly he must have realized that the supposedly monolithic "African-American community" might be more complicated than his fellow Democrats tell him it is. ♦

Tom Harkin's Comeuppance

Yes, THE SCRAPBOOK lapped up Howard Dean's "I Have a Scream" oratory after the Iowa caucuses. But our favorite part came before The Howl, before the litany of states, even before the very deliberate rolling up of the Dean sleeves. Unfortunately not preserved on many of the video loops now circulating was the delicious preliminary scene, when Dean removed his jacket and handed it to a hapless Tom Harkin, treating the self-proclaimed "900 pound gorilla" of Iowa politics, the state's senior senator, as a lowly valet.

It must have been the final indignity for Harkin, whose oh-so-prudently timed endorsement of Dean (after Gore, before the collapse) had just blown up in his face. Or maybe it was unconscious payback by Dean to the man who once mistakenly referred to him as "John Dean" twice in the same set of remarks. We liked *Des Moines Register* columnist John Carlson's summation best: "Dean took off his coat, and, incredibly, handed it to Harkin. Then he started with the screaming.

"Harkin stood behind him, with one of those 'Oh, my God, what have I done?' panicky smiles on his face. He stepped toward Dean once, then dropped back, apparently not wanting to get too close.

"Who can blame him?" ♦

Pulling Rank

Wesley Clark deserved all the grief he got last week for his ostentatious reminder that he and John Kerry had both been decorated veterans but that "with all due respect, he's a lieutenant and I'm a general." The best rejoinder came in the *Hotline*'s "Last Call" on Friday, following the death of children's TV star Bob Keeshan: "A rival campaign aide asks: 'If Wesley Clark makes a statement eulogizing the late Captain Kangaroo, will he mention that he outranked him?'" ♦

Mr. Know-it-all

Few columnists have devoted as much ink to links between Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein as the *Washington Post*'s Richard Cohen. Since the debate on the Iraq war began in earnest in the summer of 2002, he has written about Iraq-al Qaeda ties 18 times by our count (not that there's anything wrong with that; we're in double figures ourselves). Cohen's not buying.

In his most recent column, Cohen likens President Bush to Ken Lay, the disgraced ex-CEO of Enron, and excoriates the president for an "intellectually dishonest" State of the Union address. Cohen's main problem was the president's statement that WMD programs had been found in Iraq and Bush's fail-

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ure to correct some misimpressions remaining from last year's State of the Union. Among them, according to Cohen: the president's allegations of Iraqi "links to Sept. 11 and al Qaeda."

Someday we'll weary of pointing this out: Bush in that speech did not allege "links" between Iraq and the September 11 attacks. What's more, Bush has never claimed that Iraq was behind the attacks. Indeed, he has twice said publicly that there is no evidence of Iraqi involvement.

What the Bush administration claims, instead, are Iraqi connections with al Qaeda. In recent months, Cohen has called these claims "hoary" and "fictive" and "a farce." There were, he has written, "no links to al Qaeda," and suggestions to the contrary are "just plain hogwash."

He seems very certain that he is right. Why? Because "al Qaeda is not well disposed toward secular leaders." (Talk about hoary.) Plus "a gaggle of experts jumped all over" Colin Powell's speech to the U.N. detailing the links. Yes, and? According to Powell, "a detained al Qaeda member tells us that Saddam was more willing to assist al Qaeda after the 1998 bombings of our embassies in Kenya and Tanzania." And, "al Qaeda affiliates based in Baghdad now coordinate the movement of people, money, and supplies into and throughout Iraq for his network, and they have now been operating freely in the capital for more than eight months."

These things were either true or they're false. If Cohen knows they're false, he should let us in on how. ♦

Maureen's Testosterone Fixation

What is it with *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd and testosterone? Nexis her byline and the word crops up so often you'd think she moonlights as a urologist. Here's the latest specimen: "You wonder how many votes [the president] scared off with that testosterone festival [i.e., his State of the Union]: the taunting message, the self-righteous geographic litany of support? The Philippines. Thailand. Italy. Spain. Poland. Denmark. Bulgaria. Ukraine. Romania. The Netherlands. Norway. El Salvador. Can you believe President Bush is still pushing the cockamamie claim that we went to war in Iraq with a real coalition rather than a gaggle of poodles and lackeys?"

Florida National Guard lieutenant Jason Van Steenwyk, blogging from Iraq (*iraqnow.blogspot.com*), could barely restrain himself, and who can blame him? "I wonder how many of these soldiers she's had the privilege of looking in the eye? I've met and worked with soldiers from the UK, Australia, New Zealand . . . , Poland, the Ukraine, Romania, Azerbaijan, and Denmark. I've also met Fijians. Those guys ride around in swivel chairs with machine gun mounts on the backs of pickup trucks guarding Iraqi Currency Exchange convoys. Their . . . job is dangerous as hell, and they are as tough as two-dollar steaks. The ANZACS are not poodles, nor lackeys. Nor do they represent a government who is." ♦

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Casual

It's All in Your Head

Every so often I engage in an exercise in futility known as The Search for New Eyeglasses. It's not that I'm picky or that I have a hard-to-fill prescription. Rather, I just can't seem to find a pair that fits. Even before resting the glasses on my nose, I'll notice myself stretching the frame to fit around my temples. As the optician watches in awkward silence, I'll either say facetiously, "Who wears these?" or more honestly, "Um, these don't seem to fit [my enormous melonhead]. Is it possible to order this style in a larger size?" The answer is inevitably no.

I am, and always will be, a big-headed person. Even as a child, I was aware that my cranium was supersized. At age 3, I took my sister's dare and stuck my head between the banister rails—after all, she was older than I and did it with ease. Not me. I got in but couldn't get out, until the owners of the house used crowbars to pry the wrought-iron rails wide enough for my extraction, amid tears and panic. In nursery school, all the children had silhouettes of their heads made from black construction paper glued on white. Mine was easy to spot as it consisted mostly of black construction paper. I will never forget the snapping of the rubber band as I tried to fit on a plastic mask for my kindergarten's Halloween party. When I was 10, I received a cowboy hat from an aunt who had been to Texas. But rather than turning me into a cowboy, the hat made me feel like one of those beauty pageant contestants who balances books on her head as she sashays down a runway. One sudden move and it was off.

Still, my mother maintains "it's a good thing. It means you've got a lot of brains." But I can't imagine her thinking this when I was delivered as a breech baby. You would also think after more than 20 years my friends would have exhausted the big-head jokes—yet even to this day they get in their digs. Not that having a big head was much of an issue in school—either because I joked about it myself or, more plausibly, because my friends had loved ones who shared my peculiar condition.

Indeed, there are many people who can sympathize with me, even if they don't openly acknowledge their own largeness. But you know who you are: tall-heads, pumpkin heads, conicals, and those who look normal until you notice that the back of their head extends to neolithic proportions. When Oprah Winfrey suffered hair loss and needed a wig, none could be found to fit around her apparently gigantic noggin. Just two years ago there was the story of Tyler Money, a 6-foot-1, 285-pound high school freshman who wanted desperately to play football but couldn't because there wasn't a helmet big enough for him—Money's head is 26 inches in circumference. (I called football equipment manufacturer Riddell, and they assured me their state-of-the-art Revolution Helmet is now available in extra-large—up to 26 inches—for an additional $15.)

Darren Gygi

So I know I'm not alone in the discovery, at one optical store after another, that the coolest frames are all made for a head that would fit nicely inside my own. When I do find glasses that wrap fully behind my ears and don't squeeze my temples, they are usually of the Brett Somers-cataract variety, weighing about a half-pound. The experience is enough to make you demand benefits under the Americans With Disabilities Act. Except that I keep running into others with lesser craniums who think having a big head is actually a bonus.

These people suffer from big-head envy. They believe in a correlation between large-headedness and celebrity—the larger the head, the bigger the star. When one friend (and believer in this correlation) met with Morley Safer of *60 Minutes*, he swore it was like talking to a Bobble Head. (This could be a requirement at *60 Minutes*—after all, Steve Kroft is no pinhead either.)

Perhaps there ought to be a Big Head Society and a Big Head Hall of Fame. Besides Oprah, Morley, and Steve Kroft, there's John Travolta, Jerry Seinfeld, Donald Trump, and Christie Brinkley, just to name a few. Why not a National Big Head Day? We could even hold a parade, though I fear it would eerily resemble a march down Bourbon Street during Mardi Gras. The important thing is there shouldn't be a stigma attached to big-headedness. We big-heads should consider ourselves "specially headed." In fact, we should stand up and demand our rights—to be able to wear yarmulkes without pins, berets that don't look like skull caps, Burger King crowns that don't rip apart at your birthday party, and, yes, even eyeglasses that fit.

Victorino Matus

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Innocents Abroad

Regarding Irwin M. Stelzer's "The Quiet Americans" (Jan.19): As a U.S. expatriate living in Hanoi, Vietnam, and one who often is part of the diplomatic social scene (mainly through my wife, who is a country bureau chief with a major international news agency), I am often shocked at how vocally anti-Bush U.S. embassy officials can be in public.

During the Christmas holidays, my wife and I had a dinner party with a number of foreign diplomats, foreign business people, and three U.S. embassy diplomats. Two out of the three U.S. diplomats spent a good part of the evening badmouthing President Bush and his policies. It was not simply "constructive criticism." I am talking about a major savaging of the president and his policies in front of foreigners.

Being good hosts, my wife and I listened politely for an hour or so, until finally, being fed up with it all, we suggested it would be best for the U.S. representatives to either keep quiet about their views or resign. Yes, we embarrassed them, but we are also Americans who believe in being "outwardly loyal" to our nation while overseas in public situations.

From what I have observed firsthand, the State Department does little to advocate President Bush's foreign policy views and objectives, and, in many ways, will try to obstruct policies and damage the president as much as possible. It's embarrassing for any level-headed American.

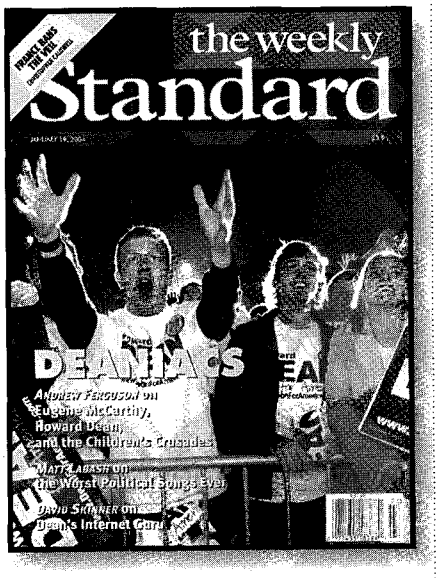
William J. Pantnam
Hanoi, Vietnam

Alienation

Fred Barnes once observed that the Democrats seem to "live in a parallel universe where ordinary economic rules don't apply"—a phrase that could describe Cesar Conda and Stuart A. Anderson in "Barely Illegal" (Jan. 19). President Bush's immigration proposal amounts to amnesty with some fines and paperwork, and it will be devastating to American workers.

Immigration is one of those issues where elites are completely out of touch with the people—partly because it is the populace, not the elites, which has to deal with the unemployment and depressed wages that result from immigration.

In spite of the fact that the overwhelming majority of people want immigration reduced and illegal immigration halted altogether, the president believes, it seems, that he can hold on to his base and increase support among Hispanics who favor his proposal. He is mistaken. Republican constituencies ranging from traditional conservatives to Reagan Democrats are against this proposal. It strikes at the ability of workers to earn a wage that will allow them to live a decent life in this country and to prepare their children to do even better. All these voters have to do to send a message to the president is stay home on Election Day.



Deena Flinchum
Blacksburg, VA

Veil of Ignorance

After reading Christopher Caldwell's excellent "Veiled Threat" (Jan. 19), it seems to me that he may have left out one of the key elements in France's Islamic problem: Why, I wonder, do France's Arab immigrants all live in housing projects ringing the major cities?

As I understand it, employment practices in France favor ethnic Frenchmen, leaving the majority of Islamic immigrants on welfare. In his article, Caldwell suggests that Chirac wants to ban the veil to force assimilation of Muslims into French society. But will a ban actually accomplish his goal? Assimilation comes about by participating in all the typical activities of one's adopted nation, beginning with entry into the workforce.

For decades, France has resisted allowing immigrants to experience such full participation in civic life, in large part because the French government's economic policies hurt job creation and make it difficult for ethnic Frenchmen to find suitable employment.

The proper parallel between France and the United States is not between the two countries' Islamic populations, which in the United States seems to assimilate rather well, but with the United States' own African-American underclass. As with Muslims in France, the U.S. government sought to remedy the evils of legally sanctioned discrimination by welfare programs that, though well intended, isolated the black poor in the urban centers and left them totally dependent on welfare. The great underreported story in the United States today is the entry of increasing numbers of American blacks into the middle class. Our problem is not "solved," but it is much ameliorated by the participation of formerly excluded peoples in civic and economic life.

Until it allows Muslims to participate fully, France will not even begin to solve its problems.

Tom Kaminski
Chicago, IL

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No Abortion Left Behind

How much is worldwide access to abortion worth? What price are the international activists who cluster around the United Nations willing to pay to achieve the ability of any woman—at any place, for any reason—to have an abortion?

We might start with the deaths of more than 6 million children *after birth*. Of the world's 10 million children who died last year of preventable diseases and starvation, two-thirds could have been saved by effective international intervention through UNICEF, according to a recent essay in the British medical journal the *Lancet*. But Danny Kaye's old international children's fund has been taken over by abortion activists who have radically shifted the organization's focus away from rescuing children.

Jim Grant, the widely respected executive director of UNICEF, launched what he called the "Child Survival Revolution" in 1982. Upon Grant's death, however, the Clinton administration demanded the appointment of New York activist Carol Bellamy. And under Bellamy, UNICEF has decided its job is not to save sick and hungry children, but to join the great march toward universal sex freedom—agitating for minors' access to condoms, requiring that refugee camps provide abortion services, and handing out sex-education manuals to grade-school students in the third world. "We, a group of concerned scientists and public health managers, call on . . . UNICEF . . . to act on behalf of children," the authors in the *Lancet* pleaded. "Child survival must be put back on the agenda."

A worldwide decline in democratic government, too, is apparently a small price to pay for bringing about the universal legality of what international documents call "reproductive rights." Why should voters be consulted about the laws that govern them—if consulting actual citizens might not bring about the all-trumping right to abortion? That, at least, is the feeling manifest in recently obtained internal memos from the Center for Reproductive Rights, a lawyers' nongovernmental organization (NGO) that specializes in suing local and national governments that fail to allow unfettered access to abortion.

A copy of these abortion-strategy memos was mailed anonymously late last year to Austin Ruse, who heads the Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute. Rep. Chris Smith of New Jersey reprinted them in the *Congressional Record* on December 8, and they make fascinating reading—for they show how NGO activists speak behind closed doors. "There is a stealth quality to the work," one memo noted. "We are achieving incremental recognition of values without a huge amount of scrutiny from the opposition. These lower-profile victories will gradually put us in a strong position to assert a broad consensus around our assertions."

Such disingenuousness is necessary for the abortion activists' strategy, which consists primarily of inserting vague passages in as many international treaties, reports, and working papers as possible—and then getting the enforcement agencies and entities such as the European Court of Human Rights to interpret those passages to mean a universal right to abortion has been established. Although the phrase "reproductive rights" is omnipresent in U.N. documents—a draft for the 1999 report from the Cairo + 5 conference, for instance, used it 47 times in the section on adolescents alone—there is not a meaningful definition of "reproductive rights" in any official U.N. resolution.

Perhaps the most interesting portion of the memos from the Center for Reproductive Rights is the admission that this strategy has failed thus far to establish the "soft norm" of abortion—for the center claimed exactly the opposite two years ago when it brought suit against the Bush administration for reinstituting the ban on federal agencies' funding of international organizations that promote abortion. In its brief in that case, the center explicitly insisted that the performances of international courts had already established a "customary right to abortion" that American courts are obligated to obey. "Our goal is to see governments worldwide guarantee women's reproductive rights out of recognition that they are bound to do so," the center's memos admit—and, "What good is all our work if the Bush administration can simply take it all away with the stroke of a pen?"

The cease-and-desist letter the center's president sent Austin Ruse after these embarrassing memos were leaked to him is hilarious in its arrogance and frankness. The memos

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are "privileged communications, proprietary information, and trade secrets" that must be returned unused, since "disclosure of this material has caused, and further disclosure will cause, CRR irreparable harm." And the harm is, finally, the revelation of the circularity in the abortion activists' technique. Their legal briefs routinely cite phrases they themselves crafted in U.N. directives, international court decisions, and treaty-organization minutes. Every time a court admits one of these "soft norms"—as the U.S. Supreme Court did in its *Lawrence* decision last November—the activists move closer to achieving their goal.

The memos from the Center for Reproductive Rights are hardly the long-sought smoking gun that at last exposes the schemes of the pro-abortion NGOs. Freshly fired pistols litter the floors of the United Nations and the World Court—all the treaty organizations at which the world's legal and practical norms are decided these days. At the Cairo world conference on population and development in 1994, or the Beijing conference on women in 1995, the international community did little to hide the centrality of its abortion agenda or its disdain for the opponents of abortion.

But the memos do at least reveal the extent to which the activists for international abortion *hate* the forms and participatory nature of democratic government. These people are fanatics, in the truest sense of the word: All other issues must be warped to reflect solely their concerns, and the mere existence of opposing views convinces them that radical evil is afoot in the world. Their adversaries seem to them demons and monsters, against whom no tactic of deceit or slander is ever forbidden.

Various women's groups this summer, for instance, denounced the government of Peru—because the Peruvian congress apologized for the more than 200,000 poor women coerced into sterilizations under the 1990s "compulsory family planning program" of President Alberto Fujimori. "We do not condone forced sterilizations," one activist explained, "but no one can deny that Fujimori's program was excellent in terms of access and information." The Center for Reproductive Law and Policy issued a press release declaring the "apology is part of a right-wing strategy to limit family planning options in Peru."

This November, Ellen Sauerbrey, representing the United States on the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women, promoted a mild resolution—"very near and dear to us in America," as she explained—that urged greater political participation by women around the world. Nineteen pro-abortion NGOs promptly sent a letter to the U.S. ambassador to the U.N., John Negroponte, rejecting the resolution because it didn't mention abortion.

The examples of fanaticism go on and on. UNESCO has drifted so far into the abortion fight that an irritated Tommy Thompson, secretary of health and human services, finally sent a letter this month to the U.N. asking what declarations such as "Governments should make abortion legal, safe, and affordable" have to do with UNESCO's supposed mission of promoting education, science, and culture. When Secretary of State Colin Powell cut off American funding for the United Nations Population Fund in 2002—on the reasonable grounds that UNFPA was hopelessly implicated in China's forced-abortion policy—he was immediately attacked by E.U. development and humanitarian aid commissioner Poul Nielson, for creating a worldwide "decency gap" in failing to help UNFPA spread international abortion rights.

Meanwhile, Douglas A. Sylva, the vice president of Ruse's group, reports that the U.N.-backed European Population Forum this month blamed the United States for bringing, as one official put it, "near-collapse to international gatherings on children's rights, development and population by opposing any language that might allow for abortion." The fundamental job of *every* international agency in coming years, the president of International Planned Parenthood explained, will be to fight the opponents of abortion by "discrediting their pseudo-science and unmasking their ideological motives. It is essential to demonstrate the truly dangerous consequences of their approach."

Only zealotry and extremism can explain all this: the warping of every institution, every issue, and every occasion to concern abortion. The pro-abortion fanatics have taken over the entire international forum. And to achieve the ability of any woman—at any place, for any reason—to have an abortion, they are willing to pay any price.

—Joseph Bottum, for the Editors

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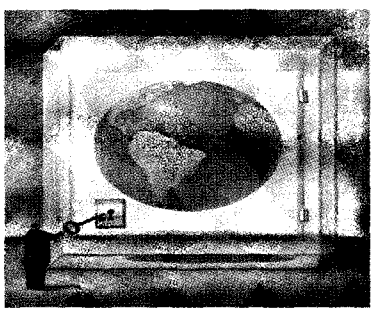

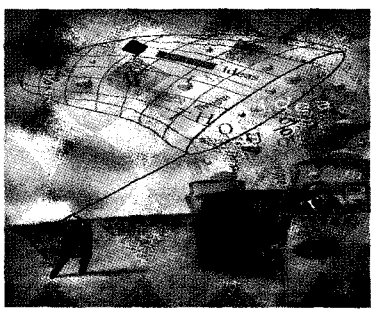

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The Spirit of New Hampshire

With the "Wes-wavers," Lieberman's mom, and Dennis Kucinich in Manchester. BY MATT LABASH

Manchester, New Hampshire

OWING TO geographic and time-travel limitations, Cicero never made it to the New Hampshire primaries. Still, he anticipated them when he said, "A most wretched custom is our electioneering and scrambling for office." From the moment you touch down here, you sense a chicken-or-egg dynamic: It's unclear if the trivial is being made to seem important, or the important, trivial.

Almost everything in the state is tainted by overkill or hype. Rookie reporters check into Bedford's Wayfarer Inn—perhaps the most storied hotel on the campaign trail—half expecting the hotel bar to be haunted by grizzled newspapermen with hollow legs full of lager. Instead, they find that they're in a dreary hole next to a Macy's parking lot, that the bar often closes by 10, and that the toilets are installed too low, making even short people feel like NBA players when they sit on them, which I wouldn't recommend.

But despite all the "quaint" towns and "flinty" locals—as the newspaper guild requires hacks to designate all places and people in New Hampshire—it is, as one visitor tells me, a peek "inside the fishbowl—the ultimate *Finding Nemo*." And he is right. I wasn't on the ground for 45 minutes before I found myself on a frozen downtown street corner, waving for Wes Clark (a Clark press release, one of 50 or so that come from the campaigns each day, reminded us that "if it's Wednesday, it's time for Waving for Wes").

For the last five Wednesdays, a group of 30 or so young campaign staffers, or Wes-wavers, have taken to street-corners, braving frostbite and heckling car horns and extended middle digits to sway sentiments toward The General. Despite all the blowback, they "stay positive, like John Edwards," says one, who's dutifully, if not sarcastically, feeding me back a journalistic cliché. This is, after all, a place that thrives on journalistic clichés, as evidenced by an entire chattering class of adults who spent the week being scandalized by Howard Dean's exclamatory "yee-hawwww," after his third-place finish in Iowa.

As the Wes-wavers take their places, Vinny Solomeno, a volunteer who's here with his cousin ("Cousins for Clark," they call themselves) shouts stage directions in an imitative Dean bellow: "We're going to Granite Ave.! We're going to Merrimack! We're going to Main Street!" Just then, a car drives by, spying the Clark signs and giving the thumbs-up. "Wow," says one volunteer, "that wasn't even one of our staffers. Those are real people!" As I talk to several Wes-wavers who admit such exercises are nearly pointless, I ask one why they do it. He's been nothing but friendly, but at this, he grows impatient. "We're doing it for you, you assholes. What would you guys be saying if you didn't see anyone out here?"

After an hour, I'm down Elm Street to the next pseudo-event: the launching of Joe Lieberman's bus, the Integrity One. If you're a candidate, it's a swell thing to have a bus. On it, you can talk to your press corps about your best attributes—like your integrity, for one. Lieberman's bus, however, is hung up in traffic. So the inaugural ride will become the inaugural walk, in which Lieberman, and a throng of rabid "Joe"-chanting supporters, will pin hapless yet "flinty" potential voters against the "quaint" storefronts of Papa John's, CVS, and Dunkin Donuts.

But before Lieberman shows, his wheelchair-bound 89-year-old mother is rolled out to wait for him. Though the temperature is subfreezing, she has neither a hat, nor gloves. I ask her what kind of son would let his aged mother cool her heels in this weather. She socks me in the arm—either playfully or just feebly, because she is an octogenarian who's been left out in the elements and is unable to muster more force. As she waits for her son to come out and roast some warm chestnuts ("State of the Union? George Bush is in a State of Denial"), she tells me she doesn't need any more layers: The excitement of the campaign is such that "I'm warm in my heart."

There's no such luck for the rest of us, who catch the Exeter town hall appearance of John Kerry and his wife Teresa Heinz, or Teresa Heinz-Kerry, as she prefers to be called during campaign years. Taking the stage of one of the elite prep school's halls, decked with marble columns and framed portraits of long-ago trustees looking distinguished in goopy oils, Heinz lives up to her well-earned reputation for saying just about anything. (Earlier last year, the ketchup heiress told *Elle* that "you have to have a prenup.") Launching into a Dadaist recitation of every subject from her childhood in Mozambique to Marilyn Monroe, she offers that one of the reasons she thinks her husband should be president is "because I'm getting older." While she extols his going into battle as "a lieutenant, not a general" (an obvious swipe at Wes Clark, who had earlier bragged of outranking Kerry), she awkwardly concludes by saying, "I would like to be in a foxhole with him."

On the Internet, the Exeter event was billed as a "Chili-feed," a cam-

Matt Labash is a senior writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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The Shi'ia have enough votes to dominate the government

But then so did the Virginians

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paign staple that has allowed Kerry to be all things to all people (he's gigged with Moby, invited reporters to watch him play pick-up hockey, and even posed for *WindSurfer* magazine). Tonight, he's not actually serving chili, but that doesn't mean that the guitar-picking wind-surfer can't show off a new hat—or an old one to be more precise—that of a blue-blooded child of privilege.

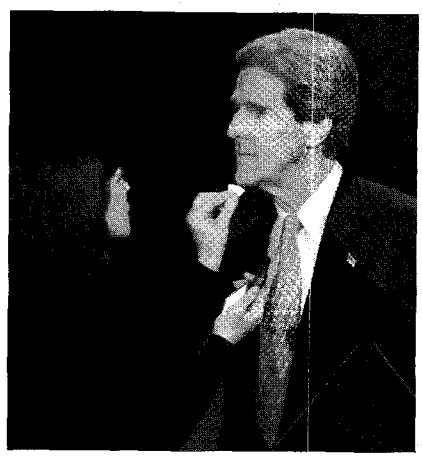
Kerry sounds all his usual themes, including the obligatory dozen or so allusions to his military service. But he also lets the Exeter audience know that he's their kind of people, rattling off his prep school pedigree. Admitting that he went to St. Paul's and that his daughter and father went to Andover, he jokingly begs for mercy since his wife used to be a trustee at Exeter. At this, my former colleague *Crossfire*-host Tucker Carlson, sitting next to me, nearly chokes on his Nicorette gum. "I don't remember him talking like this in Iowa," he says.

The next morning, I wake up not feeling so well. It seems I've come down with a touch of Kucinich Fever. Inside of Dennis Kucinich's bustling Manchester headquarters, he's consented to a slew of one-on-one's with reporters. As I wait for my turn, I gaze around the office, which looks like that of an alternative newspaper edited by John Lennon. Everywhere are clippings taped to the wall, and peace-themed literature, befitting the candidate who has espoused a Department of Peace.

As Kucinich pops his head out of his office door, he shushes us in the waiting room, telling us our chatter is ruining the audio for a television crew. Leavening the reprimand, he whispers, "Peace," and pops his head back in. When my turn comes, the staunch vegan is enjoying a bowl full of oatmeal and a styrofoam cup of hot lemon-water, which he trades for a paper cup, since, he says, the acidity of the lemon absorbs the styrofoam. "You're drinking plastic," he warns.

With ferret-like movements, he lands next to me, and tells me how the frontrunners in his party have stepped into a Republican-sprung bear trap on

AFP / Jim Bourg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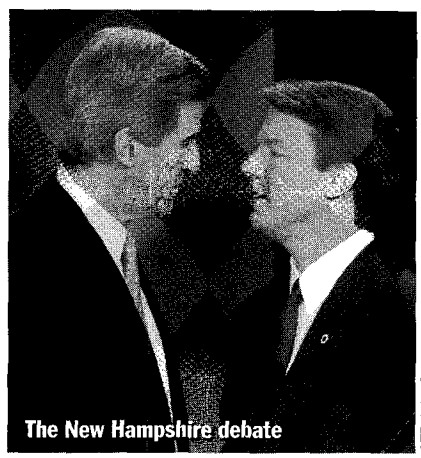
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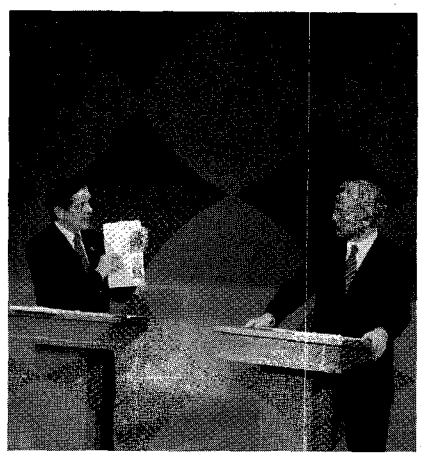
Getty / Pool

The New Hampshire debate

Iraq: They either voted for the war, and pretend that they didn't. Or they didn't vote for the war, but support a limited occupation. As Iraq comes to define the election, only he provides a clear-cut alternative to Bush, as someone who was against the war and wants to bring our troops home immediately, replacing them with U.N. peacekeeping forces. He's convinced no nominee will pick up 50 percent of the delegates by the convention, that he will push the fight all the way, and ultimately become his party's nominee. "You think I'm kidding," he says when I permit a slight smile, thinking about him stuck at 4 percent in the polls. He's not, he assures me. Because he has a secret weapon: "unlimited chutzpah."

A sucker for directness, I'm utterly charmed by Kucinich. I ask him to sign *A Prayer for America*, his campaign book, which I now call "my bible," so that I can flip it on eBay. "Cool," he says. In fact, we get along so well that I ask him to send out a special coded message to me in that night's Democratic debate—a word that's not too inevitable, like "peace," but not too obscure, like "rutabaga." He can choose the word. I half expect him to tell me to get lost. But he doesn't. He chews his oatmeal thoughtfully. "Spirit," he says. It's a deal.

I kill the rest of the afternoon watching Wes Clark bag groceries at Sully's Superette. It's an ugly little affair in which throngs of journalists clog supermarket aisles, with photographers angrily barking at each other as each tries to capture the perfect backdrop of Clark standing in front of Velveeta cheese-spread boxes. Clark, in his defense, packs a mean sack, even if he drops an old woman's diet cookies. The manager says she'd hire him if he'd fill out an application. As a fledgling candidate, it's good to have a marketable skill to fall back on.

The main event, however, comes

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that evening at the umpteenth Democratic presidential debate. While everyone is on edge, anxious to see if Howard Dean overcomes his gaffes and makes up his lost lead, something seems to be missing. Perhaps the rock-'n'roll bacchanal that was once synonymous with the name "Dick Gephardt." Still, you wouldn't know it outside. In the parking lot next to the venue at St. Anselm's College, staffers and volunteers of all stripes see who can out-chant whom. Kucinich supporters, greatly outnumbered but with a healthy dose of what they call "Dennis Power," hijack the proceedings with bucket drummers and dancers, out-funk-ifying the more vanilla Dean supporters. The freaks were also out in force. A man in a giant penis costume posing as a candidate offers all sorts of phallic campaign promises: He will "reform the penal code," he will "foster intercourse between nations," etc.

Up at the campus's Dominic Hill, John Kerry prepares to march down to the debate with a firefighter's union and their bagpiping corps, who are playing something that sounds like Dean funeral music. For a moment, Kerry's bus, the "Real Deal Express," almost grinds its candidate into the pavement as it hurtles down the hill. A line of Deaniacs obstruct the way, causing Kerry and company to knock into the back of their bagpipers, who are getting their kilts flipped up and worse. The Deaniacs then burst through the line, and the Kerry supporters start pushing back. The whole thing plays like a battle scene from *Braveheart*, or it would've if *Braveheart* had featured a man dressed like a giant penis getting hip-checked into a snow-bank.

The debate itself, as has now been well-documented, is boring beyond description. In the light of Dean's meltdown, all the frontrunners seem intent on being their campaign-brochure selves, only less so. After sustaining a sore throat and a week of nightmare press, Howard Dean appears to be sucking back his own words even as he says them, causing Joshua Green of the *Atlantic Monthly*, sitting next to me in the press room, to comment, "It sounds like a guy trying to hold in a bong hit." Other reporters busy themselves by making fun of the candidates' physical characteristics, or by writing mock headlines for tomorrow's paper, such as "Safety First."

In the spin room afterwards, stanchions are placed on a gym floor with each candidate's name posted on them. But appearances by the candidates themselves follow a time-honored pecking order: the worse a candidate is doing, the more you see of him. Consequently, frontrunners Kerry and Dean don't even make an appearance. John Edwards and Clark make a brief showing, while Lieberman takes a few extra passes. And Al Sharpton and Dennis Kucinich are probably still holding court.

As I approach Kucinich, he spies me, and immediately looks shamed. He failed to utter the magic word during the debate, but a man of honor, he seeks to make amends. As I take my place among a group of reporters with no knowledge of our agreement, Kucinich, apropos of nothing, launches into the following, proving that sometimes the absurdity of these spectacles is its own reward. "What I want to say is, these debates could have been more SPIRITed. It would have been better television. However, the tone of the debate enabled me to get my SPIRIT out about the issues of trade, the war, education. . . . And I think the people of New Hampshire appreciate someone who's both specific and SPIRITED."

I couldn't have said it better myself. ♦

Advantage Bush

They would have preferred Dean, but the Bushies are still confident. BY FRED BARNES

Manchester, New Hampshire

EVEN BEFORE Howard Dean's campaign began to fall apart, President Bush's underlings were paying attention to Dean's rivals for the Democratic presidential nomination. As the Iowa caucuses drew near, I chatted with a Bush operative at a rally for John Edwards. He was checking out the Democratic senator's campaign apparatus and stump spiel. He held a large Edwards sign in his hands. No doubt other Bush supporters were keeping tabs on Senator John Kerry and retired General Wesley Clark. That's smart politics.

The emergence of Kerry and Edwards in Iowa and Dean's collapse have been widely treated as bad news for Bush. And it's partly true. Dean would probably be the easiest Democrat for Bush to beat. Kerry and Edwards are far more electable. But Dean at least has the money to combat Bush from the time the nomination is locked up, probably in February or early March, until the conventions in late summer when public financing begins. Kerry and Edwards don't, though Kerry could tap his wife's largesse. Also, Iowa drove Dick Gephardt from the race. He was more feared as a potential opponent by the Bush team than either Kerry or Edwards.

If Bush strategists ranked the Democratic candidates as threats to Bush, the list would look like this: (1) Senator Joe Lieberman, (2) Gephardt, (3) Edwards, (4) Kerry, (5) Dean, (6) Clark. And since they regard the Lieberman campaign as dead, too, Bush advisers count the two toughest opponents for Bush as eliminated. Lieberman was feared because he's a centrist with a strong appeal on values issues, a point Lieberman himself

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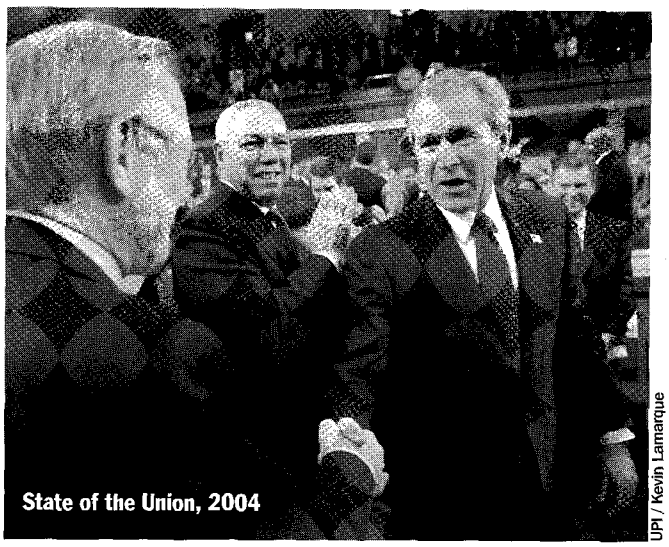
made at the last New Hampshire debate here. Gephardt was viewed as a serious foe because of his Midwest roots, personal decency, and what one Bush aide calls his "authentic populism." Gephardt would have challenged Bush in states like Ohio and Missouri that the president won in 2000 and possibly thwarted Bush in states he lost but hopes to pick up this year (Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania).

For more than a year, Republicans have been vetting Kerry. Is he vulnerable? Oh, yes, because of his 19-year record in Congress. Bush aides can rattle off Senate votes on national security issues they would use to knock Kerry: votes against the B1 bomber, against the Abrams tank, against the Patriot missile, against the $87 billion to fund the military in postwar Iraq, against full funding for the CIA as the terrorist threat grew. And the Bush camp disputes Kerry's populist credentials since Kerry and his wife are worth roughly $500 million.

Edwards is more competitive than Kerry, if only because his record in Congress is shorter (five years). That means he has little experience in national policymaking, which is a handicap but hardly a disabling one. Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton were elected with little experience on the national stage. Edwards is in the odd position of running for president explicitly on his supposed electability after deciding not to seek reelection in North Carolina, where his prospects for a second term were no better than 50-50. Edwards may be a greater threat to Senator Hillary Clinton for the 2008 Democratic presidential nomination than he would be to Bush in 2004.

What the Iowa caucuses didn't do was prompt the Bush campaign to accelerate its campaign plans. Bush's State of the Union address did not mark the kickoff. Instead, the campaign will go full-throttle when the Democratic nominee is clear. The longer that takes, the better from Bush's viewpoint. The campaign will spend in excess of $100 million, mostly on TV ads. The shorter the period in which Bush goes head to head, the more likely these ads will produce shock and awe.

Let's assume Dean is the political equivalent of Bruce Willis in the movie *The Sixth Sense*—that is, dead but he doesn't know it. And assume Clark, who isn't taken seriously by the Bush operation, won't be the nominee. Where does that leave Bush in the five major issue clusters against Kerry and Edwards? Let's see.



State of the Union, 2004

UPI / Kevin Lamarque

• National security. The issue here is the two wars, terror and Iraq. Kerry and Edwards scarcely mention Iraq anymore, except when asked. The Bush team interprets this as their having concluded the war issue helps Bush, not them. This is true. Dick Morris's idea that Bush must bring the troops home to win reelection is nonsense. What Bush needs is real progress in Iraq on military and political fronts. And Bush can make the case, as he did last week, that the war on terror is going well. Advantage Bush.

• Economy and taxes. Kerry and Edwards benefit from wanting to keep the Bush tax cuts for the middle class. That helps against Dean but less against Bush. The economy is roaring and the stock market is climbing, but the jobs picture could give Kerry or Edwards an opening. Bush is still 2 million jobs short of where he started in 2001. Advantage Bush (for now).

• Education. With passage of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, Bush neutralized the education issue, long a Democratic talking point. But Democrats have pounded him for not spending more, and his hold on the issue has eroded. He's beginning to fight back, but not as aggressively as Kerry and Edwards are attacking. Advantage Democrats.

• Health care. This is the best Democratic issue. Sure, Bush got a prescription drug benefit for the elderly, but polls show the public isn't appreciative. Meanwhile there's strong support for more government aid on health care. Bush will never be able to out-promise Kerry and Edwards. Advantage Democrats.

• Culture. One of the most politically potent passages in the State of the Union was Bush's take on gay marriage. It was a threefer, attacking judicial activism, gay marriage itself, and (by implication) Kerry's home state, Massachusetts, whose supreme court ruled in favor of same-sex marriage. Advantage Bush.

The president has another advantage, the ability to alter the political landscape, at least briefly. He can command the nation's attention at any time, change policies, announce new initiatives, meet with foreign leaders at summits, and so on. In their first big political test in Iowa, neither Kerry nor Edwards showed the ability to create openings on his own. They were reactive, and they got lucky. Kerry got the endorsement of an ex-Green Beret whose life he saved in Vietnam. The fellow, whom Kerry hadn't seen in 35 years, phoned out of the blue. Edwards played off the bitter squabbling in speeches and ads between Dean and Gephardt. To beat Bush, Kerry or Edwards will have to do a lot better. ♦

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From the Courthouse . . .

. . . to the White House? John Edwards's toughest trial. BY WILLIAM TUCKER

REPUBLICANS who dream of attacking John Edwards for making his fortune as a trial lawyer should know that his most famous lawsuit—the one he talks about most on the campaign trail—involved a little girl condemned to a lifetime of feeding tubes when she became caught in a powerful drain in a wading pool. Sitting in only a foot of water, the 5-year-old became trapped by a horrendous vacuum when someone accidentally left the cover off the drain. Four adults couldn't pull her off and she lost 80 percent of her intestines. The pool owners quickly settled but the manufacturing company insisted it was without fault.

Diligently pursuing the case, Edwards uncovered a dozen other instances where children and adults had suffered death or injury from the same type of drain. He also found correspondence indicating company officials had known of the problem but brushed it off. "Doesn't he know this kind of thing should never be put in writing?" warned one memo. The jury awarded damages of $25 million.

Not even Republicans would want to be on the wrong side of this issue. Yet the question can also be turned the other way. Does merely being on the right side of such cases and winning millions of dollars for injured plaintiffs qualify you to be president?

Edwards is the first of the new generation of trial lawyers to run for the nation's highest office. He won't be the last. Trial lawyers have now pulled abreast of labor unions as the largest financial contributors to the Democratic party. And the best attorneys have two useful ingredients for the job—personal fortunes and good instincts for reading voters' minds. While Howard Dean whips his followers into a frenzy and John Kerry awes them with his patrician manner, Edwards courts voters the way he would a jury—feeling his way into their thoughts and seeking common ground. "I have run the gamut of human experience in jury selection," writes Edwards in *Four Trials*, his autobiography.

Like so many of the new generation of trial lawyers, Edwards comes from humble beginnings. The first of his family to attend college, he studied textiles at North Carolina State before entering North Carolina Law School—where he met his future wife in his first class. Setting up practice in Raleigh, he became a legend. By the late 1980s, lawyers were coming from around the state to hear his summations. In 1990, at age 37, Edwards became the youngest trial lawyer ever to be inducted into the exclusive Inner Circle of Advocates.

Unfortunately, trial lawyerdom divides the world into two groups, plaintiffs and defendants. Plaintiffs are "little people," virtuous in their simplicity but victimized by forces beyond their control. Defendants are the "big guys," large and powerful institutions, occupying some shadowy domain beyond ordinary people's understanding. All this, of course, is hand-me-down populism, the emotional faith that swept the western portions of the country in the late 19th century. To traditional populism today's trial lawyers have added one new twist—they have figured out how to shake down the Big Guys for billions of dollars.

Edwards's campaign theme—the "Two Americas"—is pure populism. "When the president says, 'The state of our union is strong,' you need to ask 'which union, Mr. President?'" said Edwards in response to last week's State of the Union address. "Because the state of George Bush's union—the America of the Washington lobbyists, special interests, and his CEO friends—is doing just fine. They get what they want, whenever they want. But in our America, the union of working Americans, life is a struggle every single day."

This was Al Gore's theme in 2000, Bill Clinton's in 1992, and Jimmy Carter's in 1976. But it's a different world now. One of Edwards's biggest foreign policy experiences to date is a hike up Mt. Kilimanjaro. (He almost didn't make it to the top.) On the war in Iraq he is—like every other Democrat—all over the lot.

But, in any case, Edwards looks unlikely to win the nomination. Where he would fit nicely is in the second spot behind John Kerry. Then it wouldn't be as easy to get at Edwards on foreign affairs, and Republicans would have to engage his populism—which would be a good thing.

After all we could use a verdict: Are we really two nations, rich and poor, where elections can function as national jury awards, redistributing wealth from the Big Guys to the Little People? Or are we a middle-class country where—beyond a few glaring instances—most people must take responsibility for themselves?

Reared in an atmosphere where large institutions can be blamed for everything, trial-lawyer populists like John Edwards may not have the recipe for dealing with the larger world. President Bush put it deftly in his State of the Union speech: "After the chaos and carnage of September 11, it is not enough to serve our enemies with legal papers." ♦

William Tucker, a fellow with the Discovery Institute, is writing a book on trial lawyers.

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Jihadists in Iraq

An unwelcome Saudi export.

BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

EVIDENCE continues to build that the terrorist "resistance" in the Sunni Triangle, far from being a spontaneous response to new frustrations, has a history and an ideology. The correct name for the main influence inciting Sunni Muslim Iraqis to attack coalition forces is Wahhabism, although its proponents seek to disguise it under the more acceptable name Salafism. It is financed and supported from inside Saudi Arabia, which shares a long border with southern Iraq.

Iraqis, as well as coalition commanders on the ground, are quick to admit this fact—which military and political planners in Washington, ever concerned not to offend the Saudis, have sought to evade. Iraqi informants, however, are reluctant to be publicly identified, out of fear for their lives.

"The Fallujah region is filling up with Wahhabis," a tribal representative from that section of the Sunni Triangle said in a late December discussion in Washington. He had come to the capital in hopes of brokering a new agreement between his people and American troops, following disorders in the town. "They are streaming in, exploiting the confusion and misunderstandings between the local residents and the U.S. forces."

Iraqi Muslims generally express a loathing for Wahhabis, Salafis, or Saudi-inspired ultrafundamentalists under any other name. Shia Muslims are particularly known for this attitude, rooted in the memory of Wahhabi attacks on the Shia shrine of Karbala beginning some 200 years ago. "We believe every recent bombing at a Shia shrine or mosque in Iraq can be traced to the Wahhabis," says a Shia leader in New York.

But numerous Sunni Muslims also express disdain for Wahhabis. "When we were growing up in Iraq, to call someone a Wahhabi was a serious insult," a leading Iraq-born Sunni religious figure told me. "They were held in contempt because of their ban on praying in mosques that had graveyards or saintly tombs on their grounds." Opposition to honoring the dead is a major Wahhabi tenet.

Through much of the Saddam era, the Baathist regime, showing its secular and modernist faces, and inspired by the dictator's resentment of the Saudis, repressed the Wahhabis. But they organized underground and obtained arms and military training; now they are prominent both in terror attacks they coordinate with the leading Wahhabi organization, al Qaeda, and in attacks by other Sunni troublemakers.

Recent reporting from Iraq has even described outreach by Wahhabis to Sunnis who follow the Islamic mystical Sufi movements, although Wahhabis and Sufis have typically undergone bloody confrontations. Wahhabism, which proscribes music as well as various traditional Islamic customs, has sought to extirpate Sufism from the faith.

From the beginning of the Iraq intervention, Kurdish Sunnis, whose region is overwhelmingly dominated by Sufism, expressed fear of Wahhabi penetration. They reported Wahhabi desecration of cemeteries—always an early sign of the Saudi-backed infiltration that has been going on since the early 1990s, from the Balkans to the borders of China.

An individual calling himself Mullah Krekar, religious mentor of the terrorist group Ansar al-Islam, which first operated in Kurdistan and then moved to the Sunni Triangle, declared defiantly last year, in a television debate broadcast on the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation, that he was proud to be described as a disciple of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, founder of the eponymous movement. From his Nordic sanctuary, the flamboyant mullah has long sent others to kill and die in Kurdistan. On January 13, a Norwegian court ordered Mullah Krekar held in prison in Norway while an investigation of his links to terror activities continues.

Just two months ago, a report from Iraq by Vernon Loeb, in the *Washington Post*, included the following significant comments: "Division commanders also said they now have solid evidence that Baathists loyal to Hussein are cooperating with Iraqi Islamic radicals whom the military refers to as Wahhabis, a particularly puritanical sect of Muslims dominant in Saudi Arabia. 'The Wahhabis love Osama bin Laden, the former regime loyalists love Saddam, they both hate us, and the enemy of my enemy is my friend,' said one officer. 'They are in cahoots 100 percent.'"

Beginning last summer, Saudi names began appearing among those of "martyrs" killed in Iraq. Late in November, the Saudi opposition website *arabianews.org*, which had chronicled the deaths of various Saudi jihad fighters in Iraq, reported the death of Adel Al-Naser from Riyadh. Al-Naser was killed on November 21 in Bagobah, a city near Baghdad. The website observed that "the number of Saudis fighting [in Iraq] has been rising over the past few months." Furthermore, Saudi guards on the Iraqi border told the website's writers, "Saudi fighters are still heading to Iraq, with little scrutiny by Saudi authorities." A guard commander in Rafha, a border outpost southwest of the Iraqi line, complained that he had asked for more equipment and personnel to monitor the area, but never received them. The guards merely fire warn-

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ing shots when they observe people crossing the border illegally. Another guard, quoted by the same website, said "the infiltrators are highly skilled at crossing the borders."

In an earlier report on the website, a Saudi border guard noted, "We used to have problems with Iraqis fleeing into Saudi territories, but now the problem is with hundreds of Saudis crossing into Iraq."

And Saudi jihadists don't need to go to Afghanistan or Chechnya for training before they head to Iraq. On January 15 the Associated Press reported the Saudi government's recognition, as if it were a sudden discovery, that al Qaeda has desert training camps near Saudi cities.

Meanwhile, it is clear that the jihadists are concerned that Iraqis are turning against them. Some would prefer to avoid Iraq and any other theater of operations where most of the victims of their bombings will be Muslims. But apparently the main terror command—al Qaeda—values the Iraqi theater as a diversion from Saudi Arabia. At the end of 2003, an al Qaeda website, *qoqaz.net*, which became well known for its propaganda focusing on Chechnya, posted an audio interview with Sheikh Abu Omar Al-Seif, a Saudi subject and leading figure in Wahhabi mischief in the Caucasus. As translated by the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), Al-Seif told the interviewer,

> It is essential that the Jihad groups [in Iraq] unite and not separate, and that they have the political dimension to assemble the Sunnis, including the Kurds, the Arabs, and the Turkmens. All must be united under the same political power. Similarly, there must be an information and a religious preaching arm. . . . I recommend to the Mujahideen that instead of engaging in clashes and warfare against the Saudi government, it is better to go to Iraq.

He emphasized that last point by repeating it: "Turn to Iraq instead of confronting the Saudi government."

The Saudis have a long history of using foreign jihad campaigns to divert attention from crises at home, and to reinforce the hold of Wahhabism, their state religion, over their subjects. In Iraq, they have returned to their original field of bloodshed, which Wahhabi troops first attacked early in the 19th century. At that time, a British writer traveling in the region, Thomas Hope, recorded rumors that "in the very midst of Baghdad, in the broad face of day, Wahhabis had been seen—scarcely disguised—taking note of the individuals and marking the houses, which their vengeance or avarice had devoted to destruction." *Plus ça change . . .* ♦

Charity Begins in Riyadh

Unfortunately it often ends in the hands of terrorists. BY MATTHEW A. LEVITT

SINCE JUNE, intermittent reports have suggested Riyadh was on the verge of taking firm action against terror financiers among the Saudi elite. After a series of unexplained delays, a U.S. delegation visiting the Saudi capital in December finally secured Saudi agreement to shut the offices of the al Haramain Foundation in Indonesia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Pakistan, and take action against senior al Haramain officials in Saudi Arabia. Specifically, the Saudis were expected to announce criminal proceedings against the foundation's recently fired director of 13 years, Sheikh Aqel al Aqel, who according to well-informed sources was caught transporting millions of dollars out of the country via couriers.

This week, when the much anticipated press conference was finally held, the closure of a few more al Haramain branches proved anticlimactic in the glaring absence of any action against al Aqel or any of the other prominent Saudis bankrolling terror.

Officials had reason to hope for more. Despite recent United Nations and U.S. General Accounting Office reports highlighting the difficulty of combating terror financing, and the central role Saudi Arabia plays in this continuing problem, the Saudis had made significant, if limited, progress in the war on terror in the wake of al Qaeda attacks in Riyadh in May and November 2003. Moreover, the agreement to make an example of al Aqel had reportedly been reached with Crown Prince Abdullah himself, which suggests that Interior Minister Prince Nayef and/or other senior princes vying for power may have played a role in derailing action against al Aqel.

Despite continued resistance from some Saudi officials and most religious authorities, U.S. officials note a "consolidation" around Crown Prince Abdullah's reformist agenda since the November attacks. Saudi authorities have arrested hundreds of terrorist operatives, begun educational reforms, removed collection boxes from mosques, arrested radical clerics, and pulled others from their pulpits. In the United States, Saudi diplomats have waived their diplomatic immunity and provided authorities investigating financial irregularities full access to their financial accounts. And a joint U.S.-Saudi task force, set up in the wake of the November attacks, was described by a senior U.S. official

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as "totally cooperative" (though the same official conceded that the Americans had requested only low-level information and were wary of issuing requests that might not be answered). Another positive development is that the Financial Action Task Force on money laundering has been allowed to conduct a review process in Saudi Arabia, which should be completed in late January or early February.

Nonetheless, problems persist. For example, while the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (SAMA) passed impressive money laundering and terrorist financing regulations in May, these have yet to be enforced. U.S. officials praise the agency's capabilities. Unfortunately, SAMA remains unempowered. In fact, many terrorist-financing responsibilities are assigned to other ministries and agencies, not SAMA.

Saudi Arabia also still lacks a financial intelligence unit. Eighty-four such units are operating worldwide, including the U.S. Treasury Department's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network. According to U.S. and European officials, the Saudi unit exists on paper but is not yet functioning. Even on paper, it is slated to operate under the Ministry of the Interior, headed by Prince Nayef and known to be intimately tied to the royal family, not under the more independent and professional SAMA.

After the May bombings, the Saudis announced the establishment of the Saudi High Commission for Charities. This would be a step forward, as there are currently many ministries and agencies that have a hand in dealing with terror financing within the kingdom. However, several official and academic inquiries produced no evidence the commission actually exists.

Institution building aside, Saudi officials have yet to reeducate their society regarding the fact that a charity supported in fulfillment of a religious duty can be used for nefarious purposes. Nor has there been any effort to instill a sense of personal responsibility concerning where charitable donations end up.

Overall, Saudi efforts to combat terror financing are still hindered by a lack of both transparency and political will. For example, proposed budgets and staffing numbers for the announced Saudi financial intelligence unit and High Commission for Charities are unavailable. For that matter, Article 25 of the 1981 Charitable Organizations Charter, the law that would theoretically regulate how charities are run and overseen, explicitly excludes all charities associated with the royal family—that is, almost all Saudi charities. It remains to be seen whether any of the thousands of princes or the charities with which they are associated could be held accountable for terror financing under Saudi law. While the May 2003 money laundering restrictions are among the most comprehensive, authorities lack the means to enforce them.

U.S. officials' priority, then, is to get the Saudis to do what they've already promised to do. The *Washington Post* has reported, for example, that the Islamic Affairs Bureaus in Saudi embassies worldwide were going to be closed after several investigations tied these bureaus to terrorism. Jaafar Idris, a Sudanese national who held Saudi diplomatic credentials and was affiliated with the Islamic Affairs Bureau in Washington, was recently expelled from the United States, and German authorities tied the Islamic Affairs Bureau in Berlin to terrorist financing. An unidentified Saudi official was quoted in the *Post* as saying, "We are going to shut down the Islamic Affairs section in every embassy." Meanwhile, the Saudi Press Agency quoted Saudi minister for Islamic affairs Sheikh Salah Al Sheikh as insisting, "This news item is incorrect. The centers are working and they are a part of the kingdom's message."

In a similar case, even as Saudi officials were negotiating the closure of the four al Haramain branches shut this week, a Saudi official insisted that "al Haramain cannot spend a penny outside Saudi Arabia." Then, apparently contradicting himself, he added, "If Indonesia thinks that al Haramain is active there, then Indonesians must take action and not us the Saudis."

The crucial test of Saudi efforts to curb terror financing is the willingness to hold elites accountable. Will the Saudis crack down on the terror financing conducted by prominent members of their business class, elites tied to the royal family, charities, and banks? As early as June 2003, U.S. officials indicated the Saudis were about to take concrete action against members of the Jedda merchant class closely tied to members of the royal family, at least one Saudi Bank, and foundations like al Haramain. U.S. officials hoped the early January firing of al Aqel would herald further actions targeting Saudi elites involved in promoting radical Islam and funding terrorism. They were disappointed.

Beyond al Aqel, U.S. officials point to the al Raji Bank, with its affiliated organizations, individuals, and charities, as an example of a Saudi institution implicated in criminal terrorist investigations, yet not subject to scrutiny by the Saudi authorities. Similarly, though Crown Prince Abdullah officially withdrew the kingdom's support for Hamas in early 2002, special accounts called "Accounts 98," which the government created to funnel money to Palestinian organizations, continue to function and fund groups like Hamas. In fact, ten months after the crown prince withdrew his support for Hamas, the group's leader, Khaled Mishal, was an honored guest in Saudi Arabia at the annual conference of the World Assembly of Muslim Youth.

Finally, U.N. and U.S. officials both note that Wael Jalaidan, an al Qaeda founder and "designated terrorist entity," still works with suspicious charities and handles large sums of money. There have been no arrests of prominent Saudis or closures of financial institutions in the kingdom. Very few accounts have been frozen, and the Jalaidan case suggests those few have been frozen in name only. In short, evidence that Riyadh is serious about drying up the funding for terror remains thin indeed. ♦

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The Man from Seneca

John Edwards, not just another pretty face

By Andrew Ferguson

Greenville, South Carolina

Like a few other excessively nice-looking human beings, John Edwards is a victim of reverse lookism. Common experience, lately reinforced by the most rigorous scientific research, demonstrates lookism's effects: Ugly people never catch a break, while the well-configured among us always receive favored treatment. In the past, Edwards has undoubtedly been lookism's beneficiary. Having no political connections or experience to speak of, he would never have been elected senator from North Carolina, nor been fingered early on as a presidential prospect by the national press corps, if he had had the face, for example, of Dennis Kucinich, who, as a presidential prospect, has been fingered only by himself.

But now it is John Edwards who can't catch a break. His looks have become a curse. People who would never dream of using a racial epithet or adverting to a stranger's unwieldy nose or sloping chin think nothing of cruelly comparing Edwards to the Breck Shampoo girl or the cuter half of the Olsen twins. No one has yet compared him to a polo player from a Ralph Lauren ad or to a young John Derek, husband of Bo, or to Timmy in *Lassie*, or to the TV personality Lyle Waggoner, *Playgirl* magazine's first centerfold in the 1970s, but I'm waiting.

In person, as on television, Edwards can't escape the sense of weightlessness his good looks impart. A major task of his campaign, therefore, has been a search for ballast. First he tried seriousness. Edwards the candidate amassed mountains of detailed policy papers, with specific proposals for education funding, health care reform, a crackdown on predatory lenders, among much else, until he realized that people who follow presidential campaigns find policy boring. Then he took on the prettiness issue directly. Though he doesn't look a day over 13, Edwards turned 50 last summer, and his campaign staff heralded the event with a blizzard of press releases and a week's worth of camera-ready events that stressed how the advancing years had pushed the candidate deep into maturity, indeed just to the edge of decrepitude. He remains a very young-looking 50, however.

His stump speech in the campaign's early days showed the same strained tendency to overcompensate for his looks. If President Bush, he would say too loudly, dared to challenge Edwards's professional history—Edwards became extremely rich in 20 years as a tort lawyer—"then, Mr. President, I have three words for you: Bring . . . it . . . on." *On* always came out as *own*. (The candidate has since abandoned the phrase, leaving it to be picked up, with similarly clownish effect, by John Kerry and President Bush himself.) "I believe that in America," Edwards would continue, referring to his father's labors in Carolina textile mills, "the son of a millworker can go toe-to-toe with the son of a president."

The prize-fighter belligerency has lately given way to the "positive, uplifting message of hope and opportunity" that so charmed the caucus-goers of Iowa. But the search for ballast goes on. The toe-to-toe line is emblazoned on a hand-painted sign that hangs in Edwards's headquarters here in South Carolina, to which the surviving Democratic candidates will turn once New Hampshire asserts itself and where, Edwards hopes, his own life story—native of the South, horny-handed son of toil—will be enough to lift him to victory. Political commentators have issued a bull decreeing that Edwards must win the primary here if he is to continue his campaign.

Edwards was born here, in a region known, mostly by locals marketing real estate, as the "Golden Corner" of South Carolina. His family left the state when he was 10. The day after his unexpected second-place finish in Iowa his campaign hurriedly scheduled an event in Greenville, not far from the small town of Seneca, where Edwards was

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born lo those many, many years ago. He flew in from New Hampshire Thursday morning for a rally on Greenville's newly refurbished Main Street, lined with gift stores and cute restaurants amid rows of linden trees, at a sandwich shop called Meador's.

The crowd of a hundred or more, spilling out onto the brick sidewalk, greeted him with volcanic enthusiasm. With the sound system cranking out the campaign's theme song, John Mellencamp's "Small Town," he was introduced as "our homeboy." He took his place before a sign reading "Welcome Home." "I'm so glad to be back in the place of my birth," he said, in case anyone had missed the point. He delivered his stump speech, in its new hope 'n' opportunity edition, with remarkable fluency. Edwards honed his professional skills manipulating the emotions of hillfolk jurors for hour upon billable hour, as they struggled to stay awake in courtrooms across the South. By a happy coincidence, these are precisely the skills called forth by a political campaign.

Like Ronald Reagan in 1980 or Bill Clinton in 1992—indeed, like any credible populist running for political office—Edwards has mastered the trick of eliding from mournful pessimism to giddy uplift in the wink of an eye: America, the greatest country in the history of humankind, is a sewer running straight to hell, and our most glorious days lie just ahead. In fact, he says, there are two Americas. The first America is "one for the privileged and the powerful, who get everything they need." The second America is "one for the rest of us, who have to struggle for everything we get." It would be farfetched for Edwards to cast himself as a current resident of the second America, of course, what with him being worth $70 million and all, except that nobody can deny he used to live there. These days the campaign's search for ballast has settled on John Edwards's personal story, suitably packaged and mythologized.

Edwards's father in front of their house in Seneca

Exhibit A is Seneca. "When I saw Seneca, and when I saw that house his family lived in, that's when I 'got it' about John Edwards," said John Moylan, Edwards's South Carolina campaign chairman. "That house tells you a lot."

Seneca lies southwest of Greenville, 40 miles down the Shoeless Joe Jackson Memorial Highway. Edwards has been back to Seneca three times in the last six months, once for yet another celebration during his extended birthday festival, where reporters and camera crews recorded his every step, and twice to film commercials at the little house his parents lived in when he was born. Seneca back then was a mill town; the last mill closed a few years ago. The population hovers around 8,000. The town's motto is "City of Smiles, City with Style," which, you'll notice, is two mottos. In the last 30 years power dams have swelled the surrounding rivers into manmade lakes that have drawn well-off retirees from the first America, and their wealth has managed to lift Seneca, for the most part, out of the second America. The old downtown is marked by signs of both: the Seneca Gospel Supply Store is just around the corner from Purple Sunflower Antiques & Co.

Seneca has recently become conscious of its role in history as the birthplace of the man who finished second in the 2004 Iowa caucuses. "We can look longingly into the future and into the history books," said an editorial in the *Seneca Daily Messenger* last week. "So don't be surprised if you bump into a network news crew looking for someone to interview."

Charles Hamby is just now starting to get used to visits from inquiring reporters. Hamby works as chairman of the Democratic party in Oconee County, having retired a few years ago from a career selling cars and promoting bluegrass shows. "Ralph Stanley made me an honorary Clinch Mountain Boy," he said proudly the other day, sitting in the tumbledown house in Seneca that serves as Democratic headquarters. "I'm only the eighth person he's done that for, you know. The seventh was Porter Wagoner."

Like the rest of South Carolina, Oconee county was once thoroughly Democratic and is now thoroughly Republican. "They built a bunch of expensive houses along the lakes, and that brought in all these Republicans," Hamby said glumly. "Other people up here just became Republican to go with the flow, you might say. The whole county council is Republican. The sheriff, he was a Democrat, but he switched on us. So did the coroner. The state senator. The county supervisor . . ." His voice trailed off, then brightened. "But with John Edwards, this is going to become a two-party county again. We're on the march!"

Though Hamby remains officially neutral in the

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race, his wife is chairman of Edwards's campaign in the county, and her co-chair was Hamby's predecessor as party chairman.

"Having John here for his birthday really energized people," Hamby said. "We had more than 500 people, lots and lots of press. I met Candy Crowley."

Hamby holds fast to the view that Edwards's childhood in Seneca has made him the man he is, lent heft to his understanding of how the world works. "John knows the basic facts of people," he said. "People who was born poor and raised poor are like that. John carries that around with him."

When I asked about the house in the commercials, Hamby offered to drive me out there in his pickup. It sits on the southside of town, in a rough neighborhood. We drove past the shuttered mill where Edwards's father was working when his son was born. Cyclone fencing surrounds the grounds, and just beyond is the "mill village": acres of two- and three-room houses with flatboard siding and tin roofs built by the company for its workers.

"Life was hard then," Hamby said. "Work was hard. Money was hard."

I recognized the house right away. It sits on a rise above an open field and is the only pink house in the neighborhood. In one of his commercials, Edwards stands in front of the house and says: "I'm John Edwards. I was born 50 years ago, and this is my first home. The people I grew up with weren't famous and they sure weren't rich . . ."

The house is boarded up, and piles of lumber lie in rows on the tiny front porch. As I walked around it, a woman next door came out and asked me what I wanted.

"It's all right, Linda," Hamby said. "He's with me."

The old Edwards house has been owned by the family of Linda's husband, Broadus Thomas, since 1939. The Thomases are white, though the neighborhood is mostly black. Seeing Hamby, Linda invited us back to her own house, where Broadus joined us at the kitchen table. The house was neat as a pin.

"The Edwards only lived there a year," Broadus said, jerking his thumb toward the Edwards's house. He's a small, barrel-chested man, with a close-trimmed mustache and a vaguely put-upon manner. "He was only one years old when his momma and daddy moved away. I was in the service at the time, in nineteen hundred and fifty-three, so I never knew them at the time. But I know their people. They're a good family, real down-to-earth."

I asked where the Edwardses moved to after they left the house on Sirrine Street.

"They moved up to a nice house up by the hospital," Linda said.

"Course, when they want to film a commercial," Broadus said, "they don't use that house on the northside of town, even though that's the place they lived most. They use that junk house out yonder—that's what I call it, my junk house. Put junk in it. But see, they want to make ole John out to be Abraham Lincoln."

I said the neighborhood seemed quiet.

"That's because we bought up all the houses," Broadus said. "The junk house, and the four here on the other side. We don't rent 'em. Keep 'em empty. I don't like neighbors."

The Thomases said they've come to know Edwards in the last six months.

"He's just so down-to-earth," said Linda.

"I like ole John," said Broadus, "but Charlie, you got to get him to change that platform of his." Suddenly excited, he leaned toward Hamby. "That ole boy's got no business taking my guns away, you tell him. That's just not right. You start taking guns away from people, Charlie, and you're going to have a police state."

Hamby mumbled something, but Broadus went on. "And another thing. He's got no business coming into this state, this state he was born in, and start talking about banning that Confederate flag. Why's he want to do that? Maybe that's going to help him get all the votes of those negroes, but he's got no business talking like that down here."

Hamby said he didn't much care about the flag.

"And you tell him about this immigration. Well, that's got to stop. Got to. It's just a fact that we can't take every poor sucker in the world into our country. You take him out to the Wal-Mart. It's all Mexicans out there . . ."

Mrs. Thomas interrupted suddenly. "They've filmed, what, two, three commercials out here now. They show up, 12 or 13 cars and a big truck just filled with lighting equipment. It's a sight. The first time they came, we'd just got back from church and I didn't even have time to make dinner."

Stopped in mid-tirade, Broadus sat perfectly still.

"John sat right here at this table and had his make-up done," Mrs. Thomas said. "The make-up lady pulled up all the blinds, had to get the light just right. I stood here watching. I said to John, 'John, you know what?' He said, 'What, Miz Thomas?' I said, 'You're just too pretty to be a man.'"

Hamby chuckled. Broadus peered out the window, his eyes narrow.

"Oh, and he just laughed and laughed," Mrs. Thomas said. "I'll tell you what. He's the handsomest thing ever came out of Seneca, that's for sure." ♦

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Democracy Anxiety

Iraq's Shiites are nervous they won't get to vote; Americans are nervous about letting them

By Reuel Marc Gerecht

In the modern Middle East, much more than in the West, history is a living force. Denominated by faith, animated by folklore and daily language rich in religious allusion, and remembered overwhelmingly through military victory and defeat, Islamic history is an emotional keyboard for even the least educated and least faithful. When Yasser Arafat and his companions named his organization *Fatah* ("Conquest"), Muslims knew immediately the allusion to the 48th *surah* of the Koran, with its references to victory over the Jews and Arabs uncommitted to God's calling, and to the early imperial conquests that made Byzantine Palestine Muslim. Shiite Muslims, whose core identity is built upon the injustice done to them by the larger Sunni Muslim world, have this historical sense in spades.

The Bush administration, in the person of L. Paul Bremer of the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad, is now at odds with Iraqi Shiite history *and* Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, the most influential cleric in Iraq, and probably the most renowned divine in Shiite Islam. The ambassador wants to transfer sovereignty from the Provisional Authority and its Iraqi Governing Council to a new Iraqi governing body chosen by caucuses controlled by the Provisional Authority and the Governing Council. This larger, arguably more representative, but unelected body would then control the political process leading to a constitutional assembly and national legislative elections. Ayatollah Sistani, however, wants direct elections for any provisional government, as well as for a constituent assembly. Beyond any modern education that Sistani may have had in Iran and Iraq—the great libraries of Shiism's religious schools are well-stocked with books about the Western tradition of one-man, one-vote—he certainly knows his flock's fate since Britain created Iraq from the ruins of the Ottoman state.

Simply put, Shiites everywhere have been cheated. By the Ottomans, British, Sunni Arab Hashemites, pan-Arab nationalists, Baathists, and the first Bush administration, which let them die by the tens of thousands when Saddam put down the rebellion following the first Gulf War. To make matters worse for the Shiites of Iraq, their country is the birthplace of Shiism, where annually the faithful commemorate (except when the Sunnis wouldn't let them) the mother of all shortchanges, the defeat and martyrdom of the Imam Hussein, the son of the Caliph Ali and the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad. Muslims loyal to an Umayyad caliph in Damascus—the folks who would later be called Sunnis—won the day, and kept on winning for 1,300 years (minus a few, usually short-lived, Shiite triumphs).

The Ashura celebrations of Hussein's martyrdom that occurred not long after the fall of Saddam Hussein produced a palpable political quickening throughout Iraq's Shiite community. As one cleric later remarked to me, in the spring of 2003 when the Shiites beat their chests in mourning for the betrayal of their imam, they were really saying the centuries of cheating had come to an end. For him, a democratic system in Iraq would ensure that no conspiracy of forces would ever again hurt Shiites. The age of *taqiyya*—the historic Shiite disposition toward dissimulation in self-defense—could finally end, and Shiites could live as normal men, that is, as Sunnis. Though the understanding of democracy among Iraq's Shiites, especially among the clergy, is more sophisticated than that, at heart this is the wellspring of their democratic sentiment and goodwill toward the United States. Sistani's commitment to the Bush administration's effort to midwife democracy in his country rides on this simple conviction. The more complicated America's blueprint for democracy in Iraq—and the caucus system envisaged by Washington isn't easily grasped by American officials, let alone

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Iraqis—the greater the risk Sistani will abandon the project. Keeping it simple greatly helps to check the historical sense that betrayal is near.

Of course, American officials don't see it this way, and are increasingly perplexed, if not downright angry, that Sistani doesn't appreciate their good intentions. The caucus process, so the theory goes, will allow the Iraqi people more control over their affairs more quickly, with a transfer of sovereignty in less than 180 days. Preparations for elections would, in the CPA's view, take 18 months (though some officials, particularly those at the State Department with experience in successfully jerry-rigging quick elections, think several months could be sliced off the CPA's prognostications). In addition, both Americans and many Iraqis hope the transfer of sovereignty to the new body selected by the caucuses will improve counterinsurgency operations in the Sunni Triangle (more Iraqis will be committed to the process as Iraqis become more responsible for protecting their own political system, and their kith and kin). And radical forces, particularly on the Shiite side, won't be able to use the ballot box to derail the fragile political order, which has been increasingly envenomed by Sunni-stomping Shiite followers of the clerical upstart Moqtada al-Sadr and Shiite-hating Sunni fundamentalists, who are, it appears, growing in number.

Unintentionally, the Bush administration could fuel irresponsibility among Iraqis, who will gladly blame others for their problems.

Also, as a senior State Department official fearfully confessed, there is no guarantee that the traditional Shiite forces behind Sistani will be able to stop the followers of al-Sadr, or the radicals within the Shiite Dawa party, or the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, once the passions start to flow in a more open election process. Democracy in this view is the handmaiden of militants in a post-totalitarian society. Conversely, "moderate" Shiite forces led by Sistani don't appear to many so moderate anymore since the ayatollah's recent actions suggest that he may be seeking a one-man veto of Iraq's new order. Sistani's conception of the separation of church and state is obviously not the preferred conception of many in the U.S. government or of the non-Shiite members of the Iraqi Governing Council. There is growing concern in certain quarters that Sistani—born, raised, and partly educated in Iran—shows signs of Persian hubris that might lead to an Iraqi version of Iran's Islamic Republic. Because of his "bad genes," and because members of his family are still in Iran, and thus subject to possible blackmail, Sistani could in fact become a Trojan horse for hardcore Iranian clerical influence throughout Iraq.

Of at least equal concern to U.S. officials, a nonelected transitional government would also be much less susceptible to terrorist violence, and the Bush administration has been seriously concerned since August that violence could somehow derail the transfer of sovereignty, let alone messy, easily disrupted preparations for national elections. Election results could also easily be skewed by terrorist intimidation. More important, U.S. soldiers, who would have to be used extensively to protect the electioneering, would be much more open to insurgent strikes than they are now.

Understandably, the Bush administration doesn't want the U.S. casualty rate to spike upward close to November 2004—a possible scenario if the Bush administration allows national elections sooner, not later. And the administration *really* wants to find some way to vest the Arab Sunni population, who were the backbone of Saddam Hussein's power, in the new political process. Rumors, probably based on fact, of moderate Arab Sunni families' searching for visas to abandon Iraq are already spooking some U.S. officials, who know that a majority of Iraq's Arab Sunnis are, though happy about Saddam's fall, distinctly uncomfortable with the idea of a Shiite-dominated state. Elections sooner not later could ruin the American hope that some political construct is possible for the Arab Sunnis.

Elections later would, at minimum, punt the problem down the road—an appealing prospect at any time for a U.S. official, let alone during an election year when the Democratic candidate obviously intends to pummel the Bush administration over its handling of Iraq. (How any prowar Democrat can plausibly suggest that better prewar planning could have obviated the great schism between Sunnis and Shiites in Iraq isn't immediately apparent. The French, Germans, and Russians—the tripartite antiwar union that appears to form the core of Senator John Kerry's "international community"—have not shown in the last several hundred years notable adeptness with Muslim sectarian squabbles.)

And last but not least, U.S. officials don't want to flinch again before Grand Ayatollah Sistani for fear that the United States will completely lose control of the transition process. Bremer and the Bush administration have already blinked once, if not twice, and each time surely encouraged Sistani to push his views more strongly. Though the Bush administration is loath to admit it, the

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Provisional Authority and the Pentagon poorly handled the case of Moqtada al-Sadr, the firebrand descendant of the most famous and revolutionary Iraqi clerical family. According to U.S. officials, Sadr was behind the death of U.S. soldiers, but the Provisional Authority and the Pentagon declined to move against him directly (they did round up some of his men) because they feared Shiite repercussions. Sadr and Sistani undoubtedly learned from this failure of American will.

The easiest concern of the Bush administration to understand is its desire not to retreat again before Ayatollah Sistani. The United States will likely discover after July 1—assuming the June 30 date for the transfer of sovereignty holds—that its effective power in Iraq will evaporate quickly. Those on the American right who hope to use Iraq for years to come as a partner in projecting American influence throughout the Middle East, and those on the left who fear that American soldiers will be stuck in Iraq for years, are likely to learn this summer and fall that their hopes and fears are unfounded. American power in Iraq is ideological, not imperial. It is inextricably connected to the promise of democracy. If the Bush administration backs down on the June 30 date—effectively ceding the entire democratic process to Ayatollah Sistani—Ambassador Bremer's position in Baghdad could become ceremonial overnight.

This is not necessarily a bad thing. Anyone who has had any contact with the Provisional Authority knows how far removed it is from the real Baghdad, let alone Iraqi society. It is a good bet that Ayatollah Sistani understands the pitfalls of democracy in Iraq as well as Ambassador Bremer. A very good sign that many in the U.S. government (and in the press) are losing their balance and judgment concerning Sistani and the traditional clergy of Najaf is when they allude ominously to Sistani's Persianness, implying he contains within him the serious potential for theocratic authoritarianism and nasty anti-American behavior. Ironically, this nefarious Iranian DNA critique is the one that radical "pure-Arab Iraqi" clerics, like Moqtada al-Sadr, and others within the Dawa movement, have used against traditional clerics in Najaf and Karbala who have been insufficiently militant. Before them, the Hashemites regularly threw this gravamen at Shiite clerics, of Iranian lineage or not, who attempted to counter the Hashemite quest to centralize Iraq in Arab Sunni hands. Ditto the Baath and Saddam Hussein.

The point is, you judge a Shiite cleric first and foremost by his writings, his lectures to his students, the younger clerics he has trained, and his mentors. By all of these criteria, Grand Ayatollah Sistani is a "good" mullah. There are two big intellectual currents in modern Shiite clerical thought. One leads to Khomeini and the other leads to clerics like Sistani. There are certainly overlapping areas between the two schools of thought—the place of women in post-Saddam Iraq will likely be a fascinating subject—but on the role of the people as the final arbiter of politics, there is very little reason to doubt Sistani's commitment to democracy. Clerics like Sistani may use high-volume moral suasion, they may suggest that a certain view is sinful, but they understand that clerics cannot become politicians without compromising their religious mission.

Having Iranian blood and family in the Islamic Republic surely has made Sistani more sensitive to the pitfalls of clerical dictatorship. Sistani is a true *marja'-e taqlid*—"a source of emulation"—the highest stature that any Shiite cleric can have. The Iranian revolution has done a superb job of deconstructing and diminishing the clerical educational system in Iran. The Islamic Republic now produces only national clerics, whose traditional juridical eminence barely extends beyond the confines of Iran's religious schools. Sistani is the last great transnational Shiite divine. His eminence easily reaches into his motherland. The relationship between Grand Ayatollah Sistani and the other senior clerics of Najaf with Iran's mullahs is a complicated work in progress. American officials would be wise not to sell Sistani short in his inevitable competition with Iran's hard-core clergy. The Iranians have not yet let loose hell against the Americans in Iraq even though logistically they probably could. One reason for this is surely Sistani, of whom Iran's ruling clerics must be careful and respectful. As in the matter of democracy in Iraq, Sistani may again become one of America's most effective allies.

Regardless of what the Bush administration decides to do with the June 30 deadline, Bremer and the Provisional Authority are probably going to pass into desuetude quite soon. Once Sistani began Iraq's internal democratic discussion—a debate the Governing Council and the Provisional Authority had failed to generate on their own for months—Bremer's stature was destined to collapse. The Bush administration made Sistani strong the moment it decided to become a bit too clever about constructing an Iraqi political system to limit democracy in favor of communal stability and American self-interest.

So should the administration change course now, and either accelerate national elections for a provisional government before June 30, or abandon the deadline and the transitional caucus system for a directly elected body as soon as possible? The administration is obviously hoping that Sistani is sufficiently spooked by the possibility of a

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Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani

Donato Giancola

big confrontation with the United States that he will use the United Nations' intercession as a face-saving escape valve. A U.N. declaration about the logistical problems of having an election before June 30 would, so the theory goes, assuage the Shiites demonstrating on the streets and reinforce the confidence of Najaf's mullahs, who might doubt the democratic commitment of the United States. A man of moderation, Sistani might not want to aid the radicals who are itching for a fight. Unfortunately, this isn't a great theory.

Sistani, like most Iraqis, doesn't really care what the United Nations thinks. The U.N.'s reputation is distinctly bad in the country, especially among the Shiites, who saw it as an antiwar, pro-Saddam institution. Sistani might use the U.N. as leverage against the United States; he might use it as cover for a retreat. He could also simply discard its views without any hesitation. And the caucus system devised by the Americans and given to the Iraqi Governing Council to support is spiritually, if not operationally, a mess. Neither Ambassador Bremer, nor Colin Powell, nor Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has stood up and given a full-throated defense of this arrangement. They can't. It really doesn't make much sense.

Whatever our legitimate concerns about moving directly to national elections, postponing the franchise is much more likely to increase resentment among those who believe in democracy in Iraq, and to raise unrealistic expectations among those who want to stall and diminish the chances of real representative government (which may, unfortunately, mean a significant slice of the Arab Sunni population). Those Iraqis who participate in any new unelected transitional government could easily find themselves destroyed politically when they start making controversial decisions unbacked by the legitimacy and authority of elections. The passive voice is a disease in Middle Eastern politics. Unintentionally, the Bush administration could fuel irresponsibility among Iraq's people, who will gladly blame others for their problems. The Bush administration could end up fatally hurting the very Iraqis—the more liberal, Western-minded—who will be inclined to swallow their democratic reservations about the arrangement to work for the common good.

The Bush administration didn't need to get itself into this situation. If it had put less emphasis on the expeditious transfer of sovereignty and more on accelerating the election process, the confrontation with Sistani could have been avoided. The grand ayatollah could not have attacked us for being too democratic. Under our watchful and still powerful eye, we could have encouraged Iraqis to develop political parties with a national reach. And it is unlikely that the transfer of sovereignty alone is going to diminish the American death toll in Iraq. It is unwise, especially in an election year, to punt these things down the road. We should assume that the Sunni-inspired violence in Iraq is going to get worse, and devise a strategy, buttressed by an ongoing, fast-paced democratic process, for handling it.

Unless the administration is lucky—and Grand Ayatollah Sistani will let the president know very quickly whether he is—it should be prepared to beat a tactical retreat on the issue of direct elections for a provisional government. It can choose: either direct elections within the June 30 deadline or direct elections as soon as possible after. But if Sistani decides to confront us on national elections and the White House chooses neither of the above, the odds are decent that we will lose Iraq to violence. The Bush administration will have played against Islamic history, not knowing the age of Shiite submission ended when American soldiers liberated the Iraqi people. ♦

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The End of Marriage in Scandinavia

The "conservative case" for same-sex marriage collapses

By Stanley Kurtz

Marriage is slowly dying in Scandinavia. A majority of children in Sweden and Norway are born out of wedlock. Sixty percent of first-born children in Denmark have unmarried parents. Not coincidentally, these countries have had something close to full gay marriage for a decade or more. Same-sex marriage has locked in and reinforced an existing Scandinavian trend toward the separation of marriage and parenthood. The Nordic family pattern—including gay marriage—is spreading across Europe. And by looking closely at it we can answer the key empirical question underlying the gay marriage debate. Will same-sex marriage undermine the institution of marriage? It already has.

More precisely, it has *further* undermined the institution. The separation of marriage from parenthood was increasing; gay marriage has widened the separation. Out-of-wedlock birthrates were rising; gay marriage has added to the factors pushing those rates higher. Instead of encouraging a society-wide return to marriage, Scandinavian gay marriage has driven home the message that marriage itself is outdated, and that virtually any family form, including out-of-wedlock parenthood, is acceptable.

This is not how the situation has been portrayed by prominent gay marriage advocates journalist Andrew Sullivan and Yale law professor William Eskridge Jr. Sullivan and Eskridge have made much of an unpublished study of Danish same-sex registered partnerships by Darren Spedale, an independent researcher with an undergraduate degree who visited Denmark in 1996 on a Fulbright scholarship. In 1989, Denmark had legalized de facto gay marriage (Norway followed in 1993 and Sweden in 1994). Drawing on Spedale, Sullivan and Eskridge cite evidence that since then, marriage has strengthened. Spedale reported that in the six years following the establishment of registered partnerships in Denmark (1990-1996), heterosexual marriage rates climbed by 10 percent, while heterosexual divorce rates declined by 12 percent. Writing in the *McGeorge Law Review*, Eskridge claimed that Spedale's study had exposed the "hysteria and irresponsibility" of those who predicted gay marriage would undermine marriage. Andrew Sullivan's Spedale-inspired piece was subtitled, "The case against same-sex marriage crumbles."

Yet the half-page statistical analysis of heterosexual marriage in Darren Spedale's unpublished paper doesn't begin to get at the truth about the decline of marriage in Scandinavia during the nineties. Scandinavian marriage is now so weak that statistics on marriage and divorce no longer mean what they used to.

Take divorce. It's true that in Denmark, as elsewhere in Scandinavia, divorce numbers looked better in the nineties. But that's because the pool of married people has been shrinking for some time. You can't divorce without first getting married. Moreover, a closer look at Danish divorce in the post-gay marriage decade reveals disturbing trends. Many Danes have stopped holding off divorce until their kids are grown. And Denmark in the nineties saw a 25 percent increase in cohabiting couples with children. With fewer parents marrying, what used to show up in statistical tables as early divorce is now the unrecorded breakup of a cohabiting couple with children.

What about Spedale's report that the Danish marriage rate increased 10 percent from 1990 to 1996? Again, the news only appears to be good. First, there is no trend. Eurostat's just-released marriage rates for 2001 show declines in Sweden and Denmark (Norway hasn't reported). Second, marriage statistics in societies with very low rates (Sweden registered the lowest marriage rate in recorded history in 1997) must be carefully parsed. In his study of the Norwegian family in the nineties, for example, Christer Hyggen shows that a small increase in Norway's marriage rate over the past decade has more to do with the institution's decline than with any renaissance. Much of the increase in Norway's marriage rate is driven by older couples "catching up." These couples belong to the first generation that

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accepts rearing the first born child out of wedlock. As they bear second children, some finally get married. (And even this tendency to marry at the birth of a second child is weakening.) As for the rest of the increase in the Norwegian marriage rate, it is largely attributable to remarriage among the large number of divorced.

Spedale's report of lower divorce rates and higher marriage rates in post-gay marriage Denmark is thus misleading. Marriage is now so weak in Scandinavia that shifts in these rates no longer mean what they would in America. In Scandinavian demography, what counts is the out-of-wedlock birthrate, and the family dissolution rate.

The family dissolution rate is different from the divorce rate. Because so many Scandinavians now rear children outside of marriage, divorce rates are unreliable measures of family weakness. Instead, we need to know the rate at which parents (married or not) split up. Precise statistics on family dissolution are unfortunately rare. Yet the studies that have been done show that throughout Scandinavia (and the West) cohabiting couples with children break up at two to three times the rate of married parents. So rising rates of cohabitation and out-of-wedlock birth stand as proxy for rising rates of family dissolution.

Because so many Scandinavians now rear children outside of marriage, divorce rates are unreliable measures of family weakness.

By that measure, Scandinavian family dissolution has only been worsening. Between 1990 and 2000, Norway's out-of-wedlock birthrate rose from 39 to 50 percent, while Sweden's rose from 47 to 55 percent. In Denmark out-of-wedlock births stayed level during the nineties (beginning at 46 percent and ending at 45 percent). But the leveling off seems to be a function of a slight increase in fertility among older couples, who marry only after multiple births (if they don't break up first). That shift masks the 25 percent increase during the nineties in cohabitation and unmarried parenthood among Danish couples (many of them young). About 60 percent of first born children in Denmark now have unmarried parents. The rise of fragile families based on cohabitation and out-of-wedlock childbearing means that during the nineties, the total rate of family dissolution in Scandinavia significantly increased.

Scandinavia's out-of-wedlock birthrates may have risen more rapidly in the seventies, when marriage began its slide. But the push of that rate past the 50 percent mark during the nineties was in many ways more disturbing. Growth in the out-of-wedlock birthrate is limited by the tendency of parents to marry after a couple of births, and also by the persistence of relatively conservative and religious districts. So as out-of-wedlock childbearing pushes beyond 50 percent, it is reaching the toughest areas of cultural resistance. The most important trend of the post-gay marriage decade may be the erosion of the tendency to marry at the birth of a second child. Once even that marker disappears, the path to the complete disappearance of marriage is open.

And now that married parenthood has become a minority phenomenon, it has lost the critical mass required to have socially normative force. As Danish sociologists Wehner, Kambskard, and Abrahamson describe it, in the wake of the changes of the nineties, "Marriage is no longer a precondition for settling a family—neither legally nor normatively. . . . What defines and makes the foundation of the Danish family can be said to have moved from marriage to parenthood."

So the highly touted half-page of analysis from an unpublished paper that supposedly helps validate the "conservative case" for gay marriage—i.e., that it will encourage stable marriage for heterosexuals and homosexuals alike—does no such thing. Marriage in Scandinavia is in deep decline, with children shouldering the burden of rising rates of family dissolution. And the mainspring of the decline—an increasingly sharp separation between marriage and parenthood—can be linked to gay marriage. To see this, we need to understand why marriage is in trouble in Scandinavia to begin with.

Scandinavia has long been a bellwether of family change. Scholars take the Swedish experience as a prototype for family developments that will, or could, spread throughout the world. So let's have a look at the decline of Swedish marriage.

In Sweden, as elsewhere, the sixties brought contraception, abortion, and growing individualism. Sex was separated from procreation, reducing the need for "shotgun weddings." These changes, along with the movement of women into the workforce, enabled and encouraged people to marry at later ages. With married couples putting off parenthood, early divorce had fewer consequences for children. That weakened the taboo against divorce. Since young couples were putting off children, the next step was to dispense with marriage and cohabit until children were desired. Americans have lived through this transformation. The Swedes have simply drawn the final conclusion: If we've come so far without marriage, why marry at all? Our love is what matters, not a piece of paper. Why should children change that?

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Two things prompted the Swedes to take this extra step—the welfare state and cultural attitudes. No Western economy has a higher percentage of public employees, public expenditures—or higher tax rates—than Sweden. The massive Swedish welfare state has largely displaced the family as provider. By guaranteeing jobs and income to every citizen (even children), the welfare state renders each individual independent. It's easier to divorce your spouse when the state will support you instead.

The taxes necessary to support the welfare state have had an enormous impact on the family. With taxes so high, women must work. This reduces the time available for child rearing, thus encouraging the expansion of a day-care system that takes a large part in raising nearly all Swedish children over age one. Here is at least a partial realization of Simone de Beauvoir's dream of an enforced androgyny that pushes women from the home by turning children over to the state.

Yet the Swedish welfare state may encourage traditionalism in one respect. The lone teen pregnancies common in the British and American underclass are rare in Sweden, which has no underclass to speak of. Even when Swedish couples bear a child out of wedlock, they tend to reside together when the child is born. Strong state enforcement of child support is another factor discouraging single motherhood by teens. Whatever the causes, the discouragement of lone motherhood is a short-term effect. Ultimately, mothers and fathers can get along financially alone. So children born out of wedlock are raised, initially, by two cohabiting parents, many of whom later break up.

There are also cultural-ideological causes of Swedish family decline. Even more than in the United States, radical feminist and socialist ideas pervade the universities and the media. Many Scandinavian social scientists see marriage as a barrier to full equality between the sexes, and would not be sorry to see marriage replaced by unmarried cohabitation. A related cultural-ideological agent of marital decline is secularism. Sweden is probably the most secular country in the world. Secular social scientists (most of them quite radical) have largely replaced clerics as arbiters of public morality. Swedes themselves link the decline of marriage to secularism. And many studies confirm that, throughout the West, religiosity is associated with institutionally strong marriage, while heightened secularism is correlated with a weakening of marriage. Scholars have long suggested that the relatively thin Christianization of the Nordic countries explains a lot about why the decline of marriage in Scandinavia is a decade ahead of the rest of the West.

Are Scandinavians concerned about rising out-of-wedlock births, the decline of marriage, and ever-rising rates of family dissolution? No, and yes. For over 15 years, an American outsider, Rutgers University sociologist David Popenoe, has played Cassandra on these issues. Popenoe's 1988 book, *Disturbing the Nest*, is still the definitive treatment of Scandinavian family change and its meaning for the Western world. Popenoe is no toe-the-line conservative. He has praise for the Swedish welfare state, and criticizes American opposition to some child welfare programs. Yet Popenoe has documented the slow motion collapse of the Swedish family, and emphasized the link between Swedish family decline and welfare policy.

For years, Popenoe's was a lone voice. Yet by the end of the nineties, the problem was too obvious to ignore. In 2000, Danish sociologist Mai Heide Ottosen published a study, *Samboskab, Aegteskab og Foraeldrebrud* (*Cohabitation, Marriage and Parental Breakup*), which confirmed the increased risk of family dissolution to children of unmarried parents, and gently chided Scandinavian social scientists for ignoring the "quiet revolution" of out-of-wedlock parenting.

Despite the reluctance of Scandinavian social scientists to study the consequences of family dissolution for children, we do have an excellent study that followed the life experiences of *all* children born in Stockholm in 1953. (Not coincidentally, the research was conducted by a British scholar, Duncan W.G. Timms.) That study found that regardless of income or social status, parental breakup had negative effects on children's mental health. Boys living with single, separated, or divorced mothers had particularly high rates of impairment in adolescence. An important 2003 study by Gunilla Ringbäck Weitoft, et al. found that children of single parents in Sweden have more than double the rates of mortality, severe morbidity, and injury of children in two parent households. This held true after controlling for a wide range of demographic and socioeconomic circumstances.

The decline of marriage and the rise of unstable cohabitation and out-of-wedlock childbirth are not confined to Scandinavia. The Scandinavian welfare state aggravates these problems. Yet none of the forces weakening marriage there are unique to the region. Contraception, abortion, women in the workforce, spreading secularism, ascendant individualism, and a substantial welfare state are found in every Western country. That is why the Nordic pattern is spreading.

Yet the pattern is spreading unevenly. And scholars agree that cultural tradition plays a central role in determining whether a given country moves toward the Nordic family system. Religion is a key variable. A 2002 study by the Max Planck Institute, for example, concluded that countries with the lowest rates of family dissolution and out-of-wedlock births are "strongly dominated by the

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Catholic confession." The same study found that in countries with high levels of family dissolution, religion in general, and Catholicism in particular, had little influence.

British demographer Kathleen Kiernan, the acknowledged authority on the spread of cohabitation and out-of-wedlock births across Europe, divides the continent into three zones. The Nordic countries are the leaders in cohabitation and out-of-wedlock births. They are followed by a middle group that includes the Netherlands, Belgium, Great Britain, and Germany. Until recently, France was a member of this middle group, but France's rising out-of-wedlock birthrate has moved it into the Nordic category. North American rates of cohabitation and out-of-wedlock birth put the United States and Canada into this middle group. Most resistant to cohabitation, family dissolution, and out-of-wedlock births are the southern European countries of Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Greece, and, until recently, Switzerland and Ireland. (Ireland's rising out-of-wedlock birthrate has just pushed it into the middle group.)

These three groupings closely track the movement for gay marriage. In the early nineties, gay marriage came to the Nordic countries, where the out-of-wedlock birthrate was already high. Ten years later, out-of-wedlock birth rates have risen significantly in the middle group of nations. Not coincidentally, nearly every country in that middle group has recently either legalized some form of gay marriage, or is seriously considering doing so. Only in the group with low out-of-wedlock birthrates has the gay marriage movement achieved relatively little success.

Gay marriage had a decidedly unconservative impact on Norway's cultural contests, weakening marriage's defenders.

This suggests that gay marriage is both an effect and a cause of the increasing separation between marriage and parenthood. As rising out-of-wedlock birthrates disassociate heterosexual marriage from parenting, gay marriage becomes conceivable. If marriage is only about a relationship between two people, and is not intrinsically connected to parenthood, why shouldn't same-sex couples be allowed to marry? It follows that once marriage is redefined to accommodate same-sex couples, that change cannot help but lock in and reinforce the very cultural separation between marriage and parenthood that makes gay marriage conceivable to begin with.

We see this process at work in the radical separation of marriage and parenthood that swept across Scandinavia in the nineties. If Scandinavian out-of-wedlock birthrates had not already been high in the late eighties, gay marriage would have been far more difficult to imagine. More than a decade into post-gay marriage Scandinavia, out-of-wedlock birthrates have passed 50 percent, and the effective end of marriage as a protective shield for children has become thinkable. Gay marriage hasn't blocked the separation of marriage and parenthood; it has advanced it.

We see this most clearly in Norway. In 1989, a couple of years after Sweden broke ground by offering gay couples the first domestic partnership package in Europe, Denmark legalized de facto gay marriage. This kicked off a debate in Norway (traditionally more conservative than either Sweden or Denmark), which legalized de facto gay marriage in 1993. (Sweden expanded its benefits packages into de facto gay marriage in 1994.) In liberal Denmark, where out-of-wedlock birthrates were already very high, the public favored same-sex marriage. But in Norway, where the out-of-wedlock birthrate was lower—and religion traditionally stronger—gay marriage was imposed, against the public will, by the political elite.

Norway's gay marriage debate, which ran most intensely from 1991 through 1993, was a culture-shifting event. And once enacted, gay marriage had a decidedly unconservative impact on Norway's cultural contests, weakening marriage's defenders, and placing a weapon in the hands of those who sought to replace marriage with cohabitation. Since its adoption, gay marriage has brought division and decline to Norway's Lutheran Church. Meanwhile, Norway's fast-rising out-of-wedlock birthrate has shot past Denmark's. Particularly in Norway—once relatively conservative—gay marriage has undermined marriage's institutional standing for everyone.

Norway's Lutheran state church has been riven by conflict in the decade since the approval of de facto gay marriage, with the ordination of registered partners the most divisive issue. The church's agonies have been intensively covered in the Norwegian media, which have taken every opportunity to paint the church as hidebound and divided. The nineties began with conservative churchmen in control. By the end of the decade, liberals had seized the reins.

While the most public disputes of the nineties were over homosexuality, Norway's Lutheran church was also divided over the question of heterosexual cohabitation. Asked directly, liberal and conservative clerics alike voice a preference for marriage over cohabitation—especially for couples with children. In practice, however, conservative churchmen speak out against the trend toward unmarried cohabitation and childbirth, while liberals acquiesce.

This division over heterosexual cohabitation broke into

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the open in 2000, at the height of the church's split over gay partnerships, when Prince Haakon, heir to Norway's throne, began to live with his lover, a single mother. From the start of the prince's controversial relationship to its eventual culmination in marriage, the future head of the Norwegian state church received tokens of public support or understanding from the very same bishops who were leading the fight to permit the ordination of homosexual partners.

So rather than strengthening Norwegian marriage against the rise of cohabitation and out-of-wedlock birth, same-sex marriage had the opposite effect. Gay marriage lessened the church's authority by splitting it into warring factions and providing the secular media with occasions to mock and expose divisions. Gay marriage also elevated the church's openly rebellious minority liberal faction to national visibility, allowing Norwegians to feel that their proclivity for unmarried parenthood, if not fully approved by the church, was at least not strongly condemned. If the "conservative case" for gay marriage had been valid, clergy who were supportive of gay marriage would have taken a strong public stand against unmarried heterosexual parenthood. This didn't happen. It was the conservative clergy who criticized the prince, while the liberal supporters of gay marriage tolerated his decisions. The message was not lost on ordinary Norwegians, who continued their flight to unmarried parenthood.

Gay marriage is both an effect and a reinforcing cause of the separation of marriage and parenthood. In states like Sweden and Denmark, where out-of-wedlock birthrates were already very high, and the public favored gay marriage, gay unions were an effect of earlier changes. Once in place, gay marriage symbolically ratified the separation of marriage and parenthood. And once established, gay marriage became one of several factors contributing to further increases in cohabitation and out-of-wedlock birthrates, as well as to early divorce. But in Norway, where out-of-wedlock birthrates were lower, religion stronger, and the public opposed same-sex unions, gay marriage had an even greater role in precipitating marital decline.

Sweden's position as the world leader in family decline is associated with a weak clergy, and the prominence of secular and left-leaning social scientists. In the post-gay marriage nineties, as Norway's once relatively low out-of-wedlock birthrate was climbing to unprecedented heights, and as the gay marriage controversy weakened and split the once respected Lutheran state church, secular social scientists took center stage.

Kari Moxnes, a feminist sociologist specializing in divorce, is one of the most prominent of Norway's newly emerging group of public social scientists. As a scholar who sees both marriage and at-home motherhood as inherently oppressive to women, Moxnes is a proponent of nonmarital cohabitation and parenthood. In 1993, as the Norwegian legislature was debating gay marriage, Moxnes published an article, *Det tomme ekteskap* ("Empty Marriage"), in the influential liberal paper *Dagbladet*. She argued that Norwegian gay marriage was a sign of marriage's growing emptiness, not its strength. Although Moxnes spoke in favor of gay marriage, she treated its creation as a (welcome) death knell for marriage itself. Moxnes identified homosexuals—with their experience in forging relationships unencumbered by children—as social pioneers in the separation of marriage from parenthood. In recognizing homosexual relationships, Moxnes said, society was ratifying the division of marriage from parenthood that had spurred the rise of out-of-wedlock births to begin with.

A frequent public presence, Moxnes enjoyed her big moment in 1999, when she was embroiled in a dispute with Valgerd Svarstad Haugland, minister of children and family affairs in Norway's Christian Democrat government. Moxnes had criticized Christian marriage classes for teaching children the importance of wedding vows. This brought a sharp public rebuke from Haugland. Responding to Haugland's criticisms, Moxnes invoked homosexual families as proof that "relationships" were now more important than institutional marriage.

This is not what proponents of the conservative case for gay marriage had in mind. In Norway, gay marriage has given ammunition to those who wish to put an end to marriage. And the steady rise of Norway's out-of-wedlock birthrate during the nineties proves that the opponents of marriage are succeeding. Nor is Kari Moxnes an isolated case.

Months before Moxnes clashed with Haugland, social historian Kari Melby had a very public quarrel with a leader of the Christian Democratic party over the conduct of Norway's energy minister, Marit Arnstad. Arnstad had gotten pregnant in office and had declined to name the father. Melby defended Arnstad, and publicly challenged the claim that children do best with both a mother and a father. In making her case, Melby praised gay parenting, along with voluntary single motherhood, as equally worthy alternatives to the traditional family. So instead of noting that an expectant mother might want to follow the example of marriage that even gays were now setting, Melby invoked homosexual families as proof that a child can do as well with one parent as two.

Finally, consider a case that made even more news in Norway, that of handball star Mia Hundvin (yes, handball prowess makes for celebrity in Norway). Hundvin had been in a registered gay partnership with fellow handballer

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Camilla Andersen. These days, however, having publicly announced her bisexuality, Hundvin is linked with Norwegian snowboarder Terje Haakonsen. Inspired by her time with Haakonsen's son, Hundvin decided to have a child. The father of Hundvin's child may well be Haakonsen, but neither Hundvin nor Haakonsen is saying.

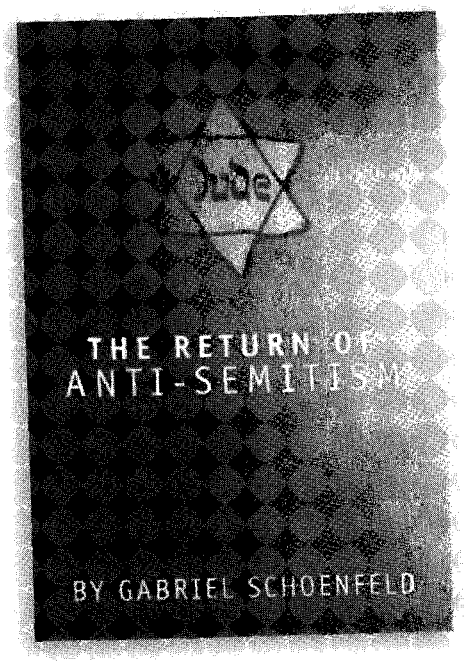
Did Hundvin divorce her registered partner before deciding to become a single mother by (probably) her new boyfriend? The story in Norway's premiere paper, *Aftenposten*, doesn't bother to mention. After noting that Hundvin and Andersen were registered partners, the paper simply says that the two women are no longer "romantically involved." Hundvin has only been with Haakonsen about a year. She obviously decided to become a single mother without bothering to see whether she and Haakonsen might someday marry. Nor has Hundvin appeared to consider that her affection for Haakonsen's child (also apparently born out of wedlock) might better be expressed by marrying Haakonsen and becoming his son's new mother.

Certainly, you can chalk up more than a little of this saga to celebrity culture. But celebrity culture is both a product and influencer of the larger culture that gives rise to it. Clearly, the idea of parenthood here has been radically individualized, and utterly detached from marriage. Registered partnerships have reinforced existing trends. The press treats gay partnerships more as relationships than as marriages. The symbolic message of registered partnerships—for social scientists, handball players, and bishops alike—has been that most any nontraditional family is just fine. Gay marriage has served to validate the belief that individual choice trumps family form.

The Scandinavian experience rebuts the so-called conservative case for gay marriage in more than one way. Noteworthy, too, is the lack of a movement toward marriage and monogamy among gays. Take-up rates on gay marriage are exceedingly small. Yale's William Eskridge acknowledged this when he reported in 2000 that 2,372 couples had registered after nine years of the Danish law, 674 after four years of the Norwegian law, and 749 after four years of the Swedish law.

Danish social theorist Henning Bech and Norwegian sociologist Rune Halvorsen offer excellent accounts of the gay marriage debates in Denmark and Norway. Despite the regnant social liberalism in these countries, proposals to recognize gay unions generated tremendous controversy, and have reshaped the meaning of marriage in the years since. Both Bech and Halvorsen stress that the conservative case for gay marriage, while put forward by a few, was rejected by many in the gay community. Bech, perhaps Scandinavia's most prominent gay thinker, dismisses as an

Must History Repeat Itself?



"Authoritative and comprehensive, *The Return of Anti-Semitism* explains how a cancer spread from Europe to the Islamic world, proliferated there in the twentieth century, and has now jumped boundaries to reinfect Europe and the United States. Gabriel Schoenfeld succeeds masterfully in connecting the new anti-Semitism to its historical roots."

—Natan Sharansky

Brilliantly written and deeply disquieting, *The Return of Anti-Semitism* traces the confluence of several lethal currents: the infusion of Judeophobia into Islamic fundamentalism; the rise of terrorist movements (including al-Qaeda) that are motivated in large measure by a pathological hatred of Jews; the deliberate and well-financed export of anti-Semitism from the Muslim world into Europe and from there into the United States; and the rebirth of older anti-Semitic traditions in the West that were thought to have ended along with Nazism.

The Return of Anti-Semitism is essential reading for anyone wishing to understand the peril confronting Jews, Israel and Western democracy as a whole.

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"implausible" claim the idea that gay marriage promotes monogamy. He treats the "conservative case" as something that served chiefly tactical purposes during a difficult political debate. According to Halvorsen, many of Norway's gays imposed self-censorship during the marriage debate, so as to hide their opposition to marriage itself. The goal of the gay marriage movements in both Norway and Denmark, say Halvorsen and Bech, was not marriage but social approval for homosexuality. Halvorsen suggests that the low numbers of registered gay couples may be understood as a collective protest against the expectations (presumably, monogamy) embodied in marriage.

Since liberalizing divorce in the first decades of the twentieth century, the Nordic countries have been the leading edge of marital change. Drawing on the Swedish experience, Kathleen Kiernan, the British demographer, uses a four-stage model by which to gauge a country's movement toward Swedish levels of out-of-wedlock births.

In stage one, cohabitation is seen as a deviant or avant-garde practice, and the vast majority of the population produces children within marriage. Italy is at this first stage. In the second stage, cohabitation serves as a testing period before marriage, and is generally a childless phase. Bracketing the problem of underclass single parenthood, America is largely at this second stage. In stage three, cohabitation becomes increasingly acceptable, and parenting is no longer automatically associated with marriage. Norway was at this third stage, but with recent demographic and legal changes has entered stage four. In the fourth stage (Sweden and Denmark), marriage and cohabitation become practically indistinguishable, with many, perhaps even most, children born and raised outside of marriage. According to Kiernan, these stages may vary in duration, yet once a country has reached a stage, return to an earlier phase is unlikely. (She offers no examples of stage reversal.) Yet once a stage has been reached, earlier phases coexist.

The forces pushing nations toward the Nordic model are almost universal. True, by preserving legal distinctions between marriage and cohabitation, reining in the welfare state, and preserving at least some traditional values, a given country might forestall or prevent the normalization of nonmarital parenthood. Yet every Western country is susceptible to the pull of the Nordic model. Nor does Catholicism guarantee immunity. Ireland, perhaps because of its geographic, linguistic, and cultural proximity to England, is now suffering from out-of-wedlock birthrates far in excess of the rest of Catholic Europe. Without deeming a shift inevitable, Kiernan openly wonders how long America can resist the pull of stages three and four.

Although Sweden leads the world in family decline, the United States is runner-up. Swedes marry less, and bear more children out of wedlock, than any other industrialized nation. But Americans lead the world in single parenthood and divorce. If we bracket the crisis of single parenthood among African-Americans, the picture is somewhat different. Yet even among non-Hispanic whites, the American divorce rate is extremely high by world standards.

The American mix of family traditionalism and family instability is unusual. In comparison to Europe, Americans are more religious and more likely to turn to the family than the state for a wide array of needs—from child care, to financial support, to care for the elderly. Yet America's individualism cuts two ways. Our cultural libertarianism protects the family as a bulwark against the state, yet it also breaks individuals loose from the family. The danger we face is a combination of America's divorce rate with unstable, Scandinavian-style out-of-wedlock parenthood. With a growing tendency for cohabiting couples to have children outside of marriage, America is headed in that direction.

Young Americans are more likely to favor gay marriage than their elders. That oft-noted fact is directly related to another. Less than half of America's twentysomethings consider it wrong to bear children outside marriage. There is a growing tendency for even middle class cohabiting couples to have children without marrying.

Nonetheless, although cohabiting parenthood is growing in America, levels here are still far short of those in Europe. America's situation is not unlike Norway's in the early nineties, with religiosity relatively strong, the out-of-wedlock birthrate still relatively low (yet rising), and the public opposed to gay marriage. If, as in Norway, gay marriage were imposed here by a socially liberal cultural elite, it would likely speed us on the way toward the classic Nordic pattern of less frequent marriage, more frequent out-of-wedlock birth, and skyrocketing family dissolution.

In the American context, this would be a disaster. Beyond raising rates of middle class family dissolution, a further separation of marriage from parenthood would reverse the healthy turn away from single-parenting that we have begun to see since welfare reform. And cross-class family decline would bring intense pressure for a new expansion of the American welfare state.

All this is happening in Britain. With the Nordic pattern's spread across Europe, Britain's out-of-wedlock birthrate has risen to 40 percent. Most of that increase is among cohabiting couples. Yet a significant number of out-of-wedlock births in Britain are to lone teenage mothers. This a function of Britain's class divisions. Remember that although the Scandinavian welfare state encourages family dissolution in the long term, in the short term, Scandinavian parents giving birth out of wedlock tend to stay togeth-

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er. But given the presence of a substantial underclass in Britain, the spread of Nordic cohabitation there has sent lone teen parenting rates way up. As Britain's rates of single parenting and family dissolution have grown, so has pressure to expand the welfare state to compensate for economic help that families can no longer provide. But of course, an expansion of the welfare state would only lock the weakening of Britain's family system into place.

If America is to avoid being forced into a similar choice, we'll have to resist the separation of marriage from parenthood. Yet even now we are being pushed in the Scandinavian direction. Stimulated by rising rates of unmarried parenthood, the influential American Law Institute (ALI) has proposed a series of legal reforms ("Principles of Family Dissolution") designed to equalize marriage and cohabitation. Adoption of the ALI principles would be a giant step toward the Scandinavian system.

Americans take it for granted that, despite its recent troubles, marriage will always exist. This is a mistake. Marriage is disappearing in Scandinavia, and the forces undermining it there are active throughout the West. Perhaps the most disturbing sign for the future is the collapse of the Scandinavian tendency to marry after the second child. At the start of the nineties, 60 percent of unmarried Norwegian parents who lived together had only one child. By 2001, 56 percent of unmarried, cohabiting parents in Norway had two or more children. This suggests that someday, Scandinavian parents might simply stop getting married altogether, no matter how many children they have.

The death of marriage is not inevitable. In a given country, public policy decisions and cultural values could slow, and perhaps halt, the process of marital decline. Nor are we faced with an all-or-nothing choice between the marital system of, say, the 1950s and marriage's disappearance. Kiernan's model posits stopping points. So repealing no-fault divorce, or even eliminating premarital cohabitation, are not what's at issue. With no-fault divorce, Americans traded away some of the marital stability that protects children to gain more freedom for adults. Yet we can accept that trade-off, while still drawing a line against descent into a Nordic-style system. And cohabitation as a premarital testing phase is not the same as unmarried parenting. Potentially, a line between the two can hold.

Developments in the last half-century have surely weakened the links between American marriage and parenthood. Yet to a remarkable degree, Americans still take it for granted that parents should marry. Scandinavia shocks us. Still, who can deny that gay marriage will accustom us to a more Scandinavian-style separation of marriage and parenthood? And with our underclass, the social pathologies this produces in America are bound to be more severe than they already are in wealthy and socially homogeneous Scandinavia.

All of these considerations suggest that the gay marriage debate in America is too important to duck. Kiernan maintains that as societies progressively detach marriage from parenthood, stage reversal is impossible. That makes sense. The association between marriage and parenthood is partly a mystique. Disenchanted mystiques cannot be restored on demand.

What about a patchwork in which some American states have gay marriage while others do not? A state-by-state patchwork would practically guarantee a shift toward the Nordic family system. Movies and television, which do not respect state borders, would embrace gay marriage. The cultural effects would be national.

What about Vermont-style civil unions? Would that be a workable compromise? Clearly not. Scandinavian registered partnerships *are* Vermont-style civil unions. They are not called marriage, yet resemble marriage in almost every other respect. The key differences are that registered partnerships do not permit adoption or artificial insemination, and cannot be celebrated in state-affiliated churches. These limitations are gradually being repealed. The lesson of the Scandinavian experience is that even de facto same-sex marriage undermines marriage.

The Scandinavian example also proves that gay marriage is not interracial marriage in a new guise. The miscegenation analogy was never convincing. There are plenty of reasons to think that, in contrast to race, sexual orientation will have profound effects on marriage. But with Scandinavia, we are well beyond the realm of even educated speculation. The post-gay marriage changes in the Scandinavian family are significant. This is not like the fantasy about interracial birth defects. There is a serious scholarly debate about the spread of the Nordic family pattern. Since gay marriage is a part of that pattern, it needs to be part of that debate.

Conservative advocates of gay marriage want to test it in a few states. The implication is that, should the experiment go bad, we can call it off. Yet the effects, even in a few American states, will be neither containable nor revocable. It took about 15 years after the change hit Sweden and Denmark for Norway's out-of-wedlock birthrate to begin to move from "European" to "Nordic" levels. It took another 15 years (and the advent of gay marriage) for Norway's out-of-wedlock birthrate to shoot past even Denmark's. By the time we see the effects of gay marriage in America, it will be too late to do anything about it. Yet we needn't wait that long. In effect, Scandinavia has run our experiment for us. The results are in. ♦

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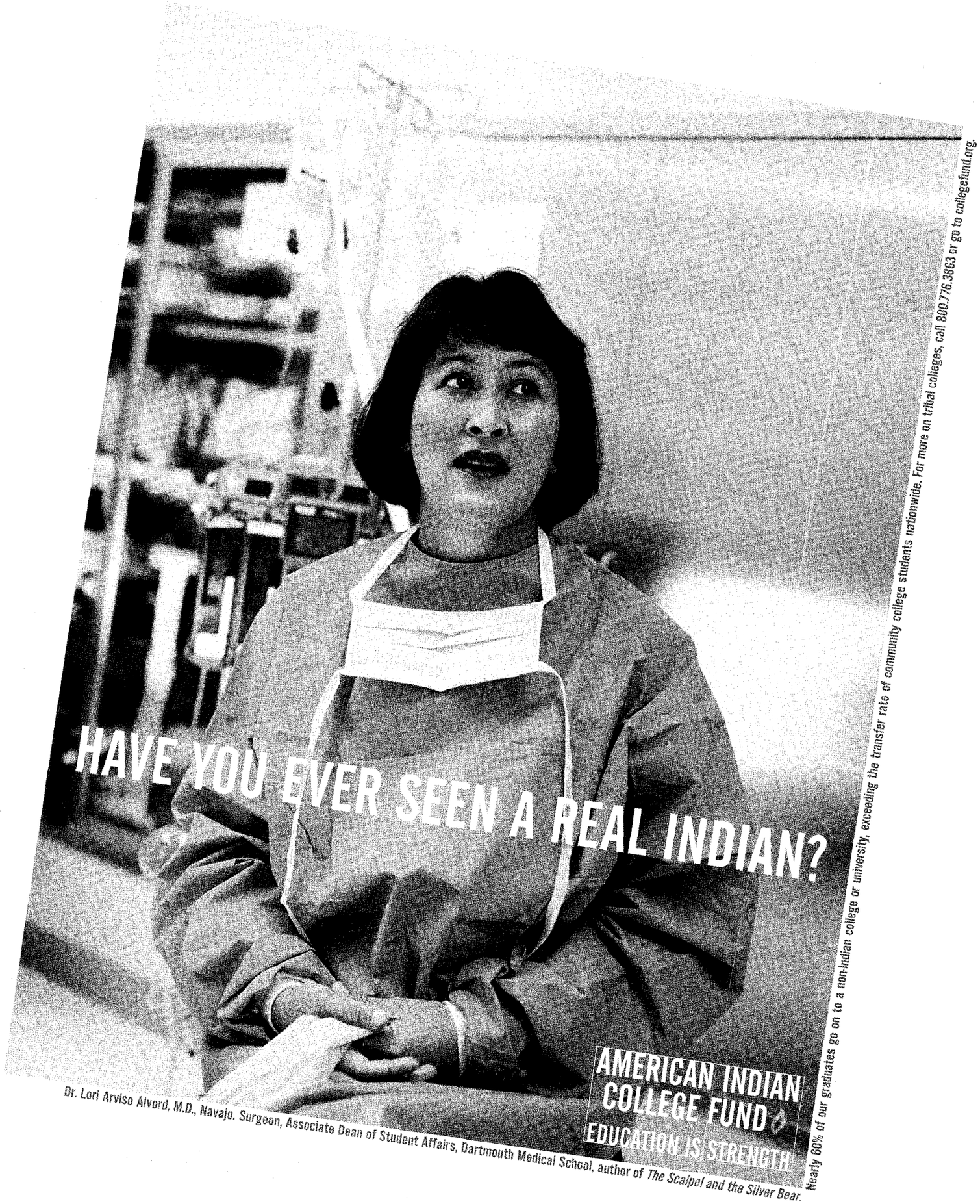

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A Fairy Tale

The life and work of Hans Christian Andersen

By Henrik Bering

Illustrations by Vilhelm Pedersen and Lorenz Frølich: Houghton Mifflin.

The prince and the little mermaid in the original Danish illustration.

In Victorian London, a Danish tourist who had lost his way approached a police officer to ask for directions to his hotel. When his garbled English and accompanying gestures failed to make him understood, he pulled out a piece of paper on which he had written what he believed to be the name of the street of the hotel. The words on the paper read "Stick No Bills." The policeman, convinced he had a lunatic on his hands, took him to the police station, from which the Danish consul had to bail him out.

The unfortunate tourist was the Danish children's author Hans Christian Andersen, who was in London in 1847 to promote his books. It is typical of the sort of situation Andersen got himself into throughout his life. The bicentennial of Andersen's birth is coming up in 2005. In his home country, elaborate celebrations are planned. A massive two volume biography by Jens Andersen has just come out in Denmark, and in the United States a new translation of his best- known stories by Jeffrey Frank and Diana Crone Frank has been published.

The impression most Americans have of Andersen stems from the musical, starring Danny Kaye as an extremely noisy teller of children's stories. And then, of course, there are the cartoon versions of his fairy tales, which have had their teeth pulled by Disney. The real Andersen—in both his life and his stories—is considerably darker and more complicated.

The Stories of Hans Christian Andersen
A New Translation from the Danish
by Jeffrey Frank and Diana Crone Frank
Houghton Mifflin, 293 pp., $27

He is both dated, closely tied to the ideas of his own age, and very modern, the famous author on perpetual book tour. He was a great and enthusiastic traveler who lived in mortal fear of being robbed and who brought his own rope along in case fire should break out in the hotels in which he was staying. He was a snob of the first rank who avidly collected the orders of the courts of Europe and at the same time a self-made man who could see that the Prince of Wales was a fat wastrel. He was a sensitive soul, who would save a worm from a beetle. Given to fits of crying, he could be maudlin and descend into bathos of the worst Victorian kind. At the same time he was an extremely vain and ambitious man who plotted his career with tenacity.

His appearance was decidedly odd. One contemporary Danish painter described him as belonging to that category of people "who are set apart by their terrible outward appearance." He was six feet tall, which made him large in his day, but he seemed to lack a spine. He had tiny beady eyes, a huge nose, massive hands, the handshake of a dead fish, and huge feet. And he dressed like a Parisian dandy. He was

Henrik Bering is a journalist and critic.

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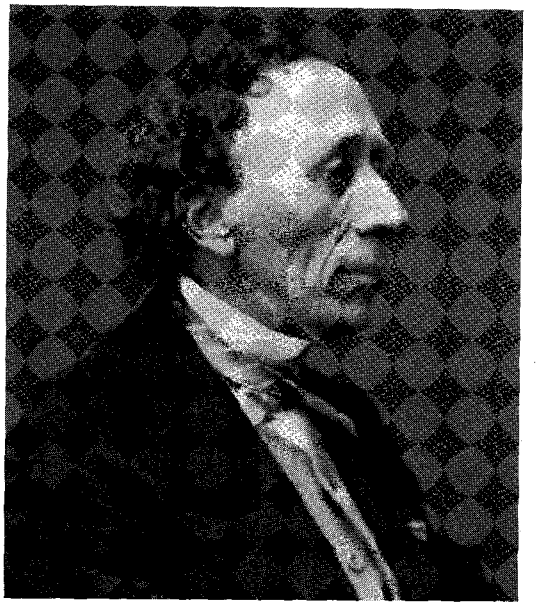

Hans Christian Andersen in 1866.

of course totally uncoordinated and prone to accidents. Yet he was able to cut some of the most intricate paper silhouettes for children with a gigantic pair of scissors he always carried with him. He was aware of his own failings and inconsistencies, but always insisted that his surroundings put up with them: "Accept me as I am. It is against my nature to be any different."

Hans Christian Andersen was born in 1805 in the provincial city of Odense, the son of a poor shoemaker and a superstitious washerwoman who later died of alcoholism. His father, a rather imaginative and kind parent, joined the Napoleonic armies and returned a broken man, while his grandfather was demented, a figure of fun in the streets of Odense. The young Hans was left to himself much of the time.

Determined to escape from rural backwardness, the gangly youth arrived in Copenhagen on September 6, 1819, at age fourteen, set on becoming famous and fulfilling the prophecy of a fortune-teller who had predicted that his hometown would one day become illuminated in his honor. He did not know a soul in the capital except his mother's sister, who ran a brothel—in which he stayed in a cupboard-sized room without a window.

Starting from this rather unpromising point demanded careful planning and considerable nerve. His first ambition was drama, and he set about seeking out the leading theatrical names. With a deep bow he would introduce himself: "May I have the honor of expressing my feelings for the stage in a poem written by myself?" In one celebrated instance, he appeared at the residence of the leading ballerina of the day, Mrs. Schall, rushed into her entrance hall, pulled off his boots, and began frantically performing all the parts of a comedy he had seen in Odense, singing and using his high hat as a tambourine.

But he persevered and managed to attract the attention of some of the leading lights of the day. It soon became obvious that he was unsuited for acting, singing, or dancing (he had only one performance, as an extra playing a troll), and he switched to being a poet who wrote impossible plays for the stage, which were routinely turned down. Convinced of his own genius, he deluged people with poems and bits of dialogue, much of it cribbed from others. When caught plagiarizing some famous playwrights, he whimpered rather disarmingly, "Yes, but they are so very talented."

His mentors rightly felt that his intellect needed schooling and sent him to Latin school, where he had to study with much younger classmates and endure the humiliations of a sadistic headmaster, the memory of whom was to trouble him for the rest of his life. In his autobiography, *The Fairy Tale of My Life*, a highly idealized version of events, he presented himself as the archetypal lonely genius forced to suffer much before the world pays attention. Smug and tiny Denmark is not the most hospitable place, then or now, for the kind of almost American self-invention Andersen practiced. But, in a certain way, he needed the adversity and fed upon it. Throughout his career, the fuel that powered him was the unwillingness to let his opponents, real or imagined, get him down.

That commands a certain respect—but Andersen was also hugely infuriating. Reading about him in Jens Andersen's new biography often makes your toes curl. He combined aggressive self-promotion with gross flattery. He especially appealed to the mother instinct of the wives of wealthy and influential men, and his self-centeredness could be monstrous. When he heard that one of Copenhagen's leading literary hostesses had died, his only response was to wonder whether she had managed to read his latest novel before she died. Denmark's other famous author of the era, Søren Kierkegaard, contemptuously dismissed Andersen's constant appeals to the reader's sympathy as that of a "sniveler."

Kierkegaard also ascribed the feebleness of some of Andersen's writing to "these plants where she and he are on the same stem." This androgynous aspect is explored extensively in the new biography, a bit too extensively perhaps. Authors of children's books are not supposed to have stunted and sad sex lives like Andersen, or rich and varied ones, for that matter. In fact, they are not supposed to have sex lives at all. The image of the nation's favorite storyteller masturbating like a moron is not exactly an uplifting one. Still, Andersen saw his sexual innocence as a precondition for his art. He simply did not want to grow up. That is all one needs to know and indeed, all one wants to know.

More amusingly, he was a world-class hypochondriac, beset by phobias of every imaginable kind. He kept

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dreaming that his teeth were falling out and he lived in constant fear of being buried alive. Often he had a small note next to his bed, saying "I only appear to be dead." And when once by accident he had borrowed somebody else's hat, he immediately started worrying about having caught some horrendous skin disease. In anger, he knocked a few dents into the hat.

What makes the reader forgive Andersen for all this is, of course, his talent. Under all the weirdness lay a keen and perceptive mind. He realized when he was being irrational and ridiculous, and his diaries show plenty of self-irony. And his fairy tales came about as an afterthought, writing drills that started with the retelling of folk tales he had heard as a child but soon turned into his own stories.

Like all great children's literature, Andersen's tales operate on two levels: that of the child, who loves the plot, and that of the grown up, who appreciates the irony and satire. His best tales, such as "The Nightingale" and "The Snow Queen," treat such grown-up themes as the artificial versus the genuine and the conflict between seeming and being. Pervading the stories is a sense of true goodness. One has to be extremely hard hearted not to be touched by efforts such as "The Story of a Mother," about a mother's loss of her child, which regrettably the Franks do not include in their new selection.

There is also a delightfully anarchic, antiauthoritarian streak in his fairy tales. In "The Emperor's New Clothes," it is the little child who sees through all the pretension of the court. And one finds the peculiar droll logic that is also present in Lewis Carroll. His use of language is extremely vivid, and he makes the otherwise rather harsh Danish language sound like music. He has a subtle and immediately recognizable tone of voice which the current translators have been very apt in catching. And that is no small achievement. What they are handling here are lines that are etched in the minds of every Dane. The slightest misstep, the merest attempt at taking liberties would cause instant derision.

Surprisingly, Andersen's diaries and travel writing have aged almost as well as his fairy tales. "When the snow melts and the stork arrives and the first steamships leave the harbor, I get this painful urge to travel." He speaks of his double nature, his fear of danger and the urge to experience it. He visited Germany, Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, and Britain, and eventually reached as far as Greece and Constantinople. He was keen on railroads and all modern inventions that made quick communication possible.

He planned his foreign conquests like a field marshal. He received honors and decorations from the courts of Europe, including the order of Eagle of the Third Class, bestowed on him by King Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia (he would no doubt have preferred a first class), and he met the great men of his age: Heinrich Heine, Franz Liszt, Honoré de Balzac, Alexandre Dumas, and Richard Wagner.

Upon his return to Copenhagen, he would constantly remind the Danes how the outside world appreciated him more than they did—indeed, he was not above planting items in the foreign press about himself which he would then recycle at home.

In Britain, he met Charles Dickens, which he describes as one of the highlights of his life. He felt they had so much in common. Both had unhappy childhoods and both had been able to triumph over adversity. Andersen first met Dickens on the 1847 trip to London, and he met the English author a second time ten years later when Andersen came to stay at Gad's Hill, Dickens's summer residence.

Andersen was supposed to stay for a week. He ended up staying for five. His English was totally incomprehensible and his behavior was certainly unusual. One morning Dickens's wife found him prostrate on the lawn, howling with tears and clutching a newspaper.

It turned out to be an unfavorable review of one of his books. Dickens had to console him and advise him never to bother with reviews.

On another occasion Andersen was suffering from an acute case of corns which had developed during a two-hour cab drive through some of the less-developed parts of London. "Convinced that the cabman was bent on robbery and murder, he had put his watch and money into his boots together with a Bradshaw, a pocket book, a pair of scissors, a pen knife, a book or two, a few letters of introduction and some miscellaneous property," Dickens wrote in a letter to a friend. When Andersen finally left, Dickens put up a small card on the guest bedroom mirror: "Hans Christian Andersen slept in this room for five weeks which seemed to the family ages."

One might have expected Dickens to be more amused—for Andersen was really as delightfully weird as some of Dickens's own characters. ♦

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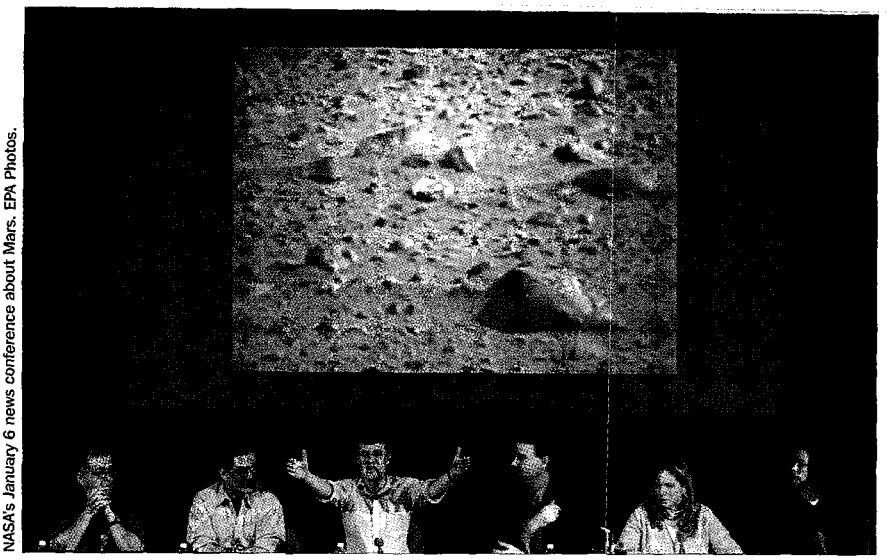

NASA's January 6 news conference about Mars. EPA Photos.

The Red Planet

Reaching out to Mars.

BY ADAM KEIPER

Brian Wilcox was twelve in 1964 when he drove his first lunar rover. His father, a manager at General Motors, had led the team that built the robotic vehicle, and Wilcox got to play with it on a moonscape mock-up. He drove it into a ditch.

But NASA soon deemed it unnecessary to send a remote-controlled vehicle to the moon before sending humans, so the robotic rover was mothballed. Kept in storage through the 1970s by a technician who repeatedly disobeyed orders to junk it, the rover found its way back to Wilcox in 1982, when he was working as an engineer at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. This time, he developed a video and computer control system that would keep it from going astray.

The story of Wilcox's rover illustrates the shifting moods of the American space program. In the earliest days in space, robotic probes were routinely expected to open the way for human explorers. By the late 1960s, robotic exploration had been scaled back because of the political impetus to fulfill President Kennedy's promise to land a man on the moon. But after that goal was met, support for space petered out—and when the Apollo 17 astronauts left the moon in 1972, the era of human space exploration ended. Since then, human activity in space has been limited to orbiting the Earth in shuttles, capsules, and stations. For three decades, human explorers have been mothballed and the task of exploration has been left to machines.

Sojourner
An Insider's View of the Mars Pathfinder Mission
by Andrew Mishkin
Berkley, 333 pp., $21.95

Mars on Earth
The Adventures of Space Pioneers in the High Arctic
by Robert Zubrin
Tarcher/Penguin, 351 pp., $28.95

Andrew Mishkin's *Sojourner* gives the history of one such robot intended for exploration, the six-wheeled rover that landed on Mars on July 4, 1997, as part of the Pathfinder mission. Mishkin, a leader of the group that developed the rover, tells of the dozens of engineers who contributed to the project—one of whom was Brian Wilcox, who had played with the moon rover as a boy, now a grown-up playing with a new rover. Mishkin describes months of frustration ending in flashes of creativity, and the occasional ingenious acts of jury-rigging that resulted in minor advances in mobility or navigation. Wilcox, for instance, invented a camera-stabilizing contraption made of baby bottles and car oil. When he went to the drugstore to buy the parts he needed, the cashier "wondered just what Wilcox was going to be feeding his baby."

But for the most part, Mishkin's book describes that hard and unhappy place where engineering and management meet, and in time it becomes draining to read of the constant compromises between technical brilliance and budgetary reality. The Pathfinder mission was ultimately a success, and the rover's pictures of the Martian surface proved extremely popular on the Internet. But soon the press and the public got bored—and after two months of driving around looking at rocks even the rover's makers started to tire of it. One of the engineers operating the rover told Mishkin, "I'd have to say I was among those people, thinking, 'How long is this going to go on?'" To stay interested, he had to remind himself repeatedly that he was controlling a vehicle on another planet.

Some observers of NASA have used the success of the Sojourner Rover—and this year's bigger and better Mars rovers—to argue that the robotic approach to space exploration is the right one. For instance, Robert Park, the University of Maryland physicist known for debunking bad science, has said that the "scientists that command telerobots" have become "virtual astronauts" and "the explorers of today." Why spend money to risk human lives on a job that robots can do just as well, or perhaps better?

Yet in the past decade, several critics of the robots-only school have come to conclude that the real work of exploration and scientific research can only be done by humans on the ground. They argue that while robots can do an admirable job of poking and sniffing and photographing, exploration remains a fundamentally human activity—one dependent upon hands, legs, eyes, and intuition.

The most prominent of these critics is Robert Zubrin, the engineer who presides over the Mars Society, an

Adam Keiper is managing editor of The New Atlantis.

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international organization devoted to seeing humans sent to the Red Planet. In 1989, after President Bush's plans for missions to the moon and Mars sank under the weight of a $450 billion price tag, Zubrin helped NASA develop an alternative plan that could get us to Mars sooner for a fraction of the cost. That plan was elaborated in meticulous detail in Zubrin's 1996 book *The Case for Mars*. Now, in *Mars on Earth*, Zubrin fills us in on what he's been doing since then.

Zubrin describes the 1998 founding of the Mars Society, and the group's decision to begin an ambitious program of "Mars analogue" research—that is, the construction of habitats comparable to those that would house early astronauts on Mars, tested in conditions similar to those found there. At research stations in the Canadian Arctic and the deserts of Utah, teams of volunteers simulated stints on the Martian surface, while conducting cartographic, geological, and biological research forays like those that might be involved in a Mars mission. They also tested equipment that would be vital to such a mission, like space suits, motor vehicles, and toilets that incinerate waste.

The simulations—which are still going on—have yielded practical conclusions that planners of real Mars missions would do well to heed. For instance, some complex scientific equipment doesn't hold up well in dusty conditions like those found on Mars. Sleep cycles should be uniform, not in shifts, so the explorers can work on projects together. And vegetarian astronauts can make life difficult for their omnivorous crewmates.

The researchers also had experiences that bolster Zubrin's conviction that robots are inferior explorers. One crew used robotic rovers to scout out a site before tramping in to explore it themselves. They found that "the robots missed much essential information about the site—for example, the presence of lichens—and all the valid information they did return was readily apparent to the crew within the first minute of their arrival on the scene."

Part of the debate has been settled by President Bush's announcement on January 14 that the United States is going to resume the task of space exploration abandoned three decades ago. In directing NASA to plan for new missions to the moon and beyond, the president has selected an inspirational challenge. The full measure of this challenge will only be known to future generations, who may remember this as the moment when we shed our timidity and set out again for the stars. ♦

Artistic Manners

Rosenquist at the Guggenheim, Kandinsky at the Jewish Museum, and Currin at the Whitney.

BY THOMAS M. DISCH

When James Rosenquist's great engulfing multipanel installation *F-111* was shown at the Castelli Gallery in 1965, the shock waves were felt throughout the art world. The shock combined visceral impact with scandal. Rosenquist, who'd gotten by during his apprentice years by painting outdoor billboards, used those suspiciously commercial skills to produce great expanses of painted canvas as explosively bright as those of the regnant abstract expressionists—but with the crowd-pleasing high resolution of four-color separations and the sheer glare of a well-stocked supermarket. Moreover, the images he depicted by these doubtful means were an anthology of all things art lovers profess to despise: a cute little girl with a lipsticked smile, a tangle of canned spaghetti (the lowest of low cuisines), light bulbs, a Firestone tire, and, threading through the whole mishmash, an Air Force fighter jet, the F-111 of the title.

Thomas M. Disch is a poet, novelist, and art critic.

The effect was confounding. Collages before had been on a more modest scale, something done with scissors and paste. There were precedents in the Cubists, and Stuart Davis had even paid homage to ad layouts on a fairly large scale. But this was like Times Square, and the import of its iconography was not clear. It seemed to *approve* its disparate and incommensurable elements. There was a celebratory air to the cheap spaghetti, a mechanic's respect for the gleam and the thrust of the jet. In 1965—as now—one expected every artist to contemn that sort of thing, and the Guggenheim flyer for a new exhibition insists that disdain had been, in fact, the artist's intent back when he painted it: "This room-scale painting, measuring 86 feet in length, was named after a fighter bomber then in development for the Vietnam War and was painted in response to the military-industrial complex that fostered America's booming midcentury economy. . . . It was an antiwar statement approaching the significance and power of Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*."

Rosenquist is on record as concurring with that view of his work, and it is doubtless a prudent spin to put on things, but to my mind it is no more an antiwar or anti-consumerist statement than Warhol's iconic Campbell soup cans are. Indeed, Warhol registers as cool next to Rosenquist's carnivalesque brio. The king-sized slices of cake in his works are meant to seem tasty—albeit for gargantuan and indiscriminating appetites. They may be ironic, like the cake that Marie Antoinette commended to hungry mobs, but it was a true representation of the American dream, not the American nightmare.

Artists express meanings in their paintings that are not easily or pru-

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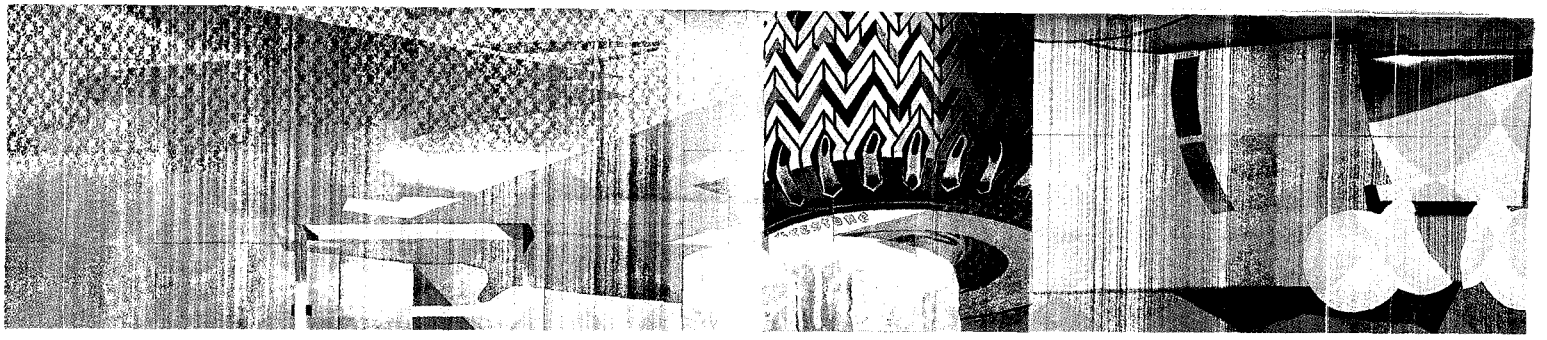

dently expressed in words. Botticelli's and Michelangelo's nudes openly espouse beliefs that their early admirers could not have endorsed if they had been spelled out in cold print. Theirs was an Enlightenment before the fact. Similarly, the pleasure of attending the Guggenheim's recent Rosenquist retrospective comes from pondering what Rosenquist was on about, the sense he was able to make of the mushrooming growth of our global village through the 1960s and onwards. A preview, so to speak, of *Blade Runner*.

Rosenquist's prophetic gifts do diminish as one mounts the Guggenheim's ramp toward the present, or perhaps our attention wearies. But even at his most formulaic, when he has nothing better to do than process earlier icons through a shredder, his forms and colors gratify the eye. No one, not even Léger, loved cylinders more than he; no one else in the Pop Art crowd was a more exuberant colorist. He was the Brian Wilson of the paintbrush.

You might suppose the huge continuous interior of the Guggenheim would be the right setting for a Rosenquist retrospective, but in fact even his largest works (except the self-enclosed *F-111*) come across as insufficient in scale. I wanted to see them along a highway, at true billboard dimensions, or, lacking that, in a smaller convention space in which they could loom large. At the Guggenheim they are cropped by the architecture of the ramp, and you can't back off for a distanced view. In tomorrow's ideal mega-America there will be a Rosenquist Museum bigger than all Dia: Beacon, where the works can be seen to full advantage.

Wassily Kandinsky in 1911

Kandinsky photo and painting: Courtesy Jewish Museum. Rosenquist painting: Courtesy Guggenheim Museum.

A little way up Fifth Avenue, at the Jewish Museum, there is still time to catch a fascinating show combining works by Kandinsky, Schoenberg, and the Munich Blue Rider Group. The show hinges on the auspicious presence of Kandinsky at a Munich concert of works by the Viennese Schoenberg on January 2, 1911. The resulting painting, the almost-abstract *Impression III (Concert)* was the immediate fruit, and the long-term result was Schoenberg's honorary membership as one of the Blue Rider group of painters.

Schoenberg's canvases do him at least as much credit as Prince Charles's watercolors do the House of Windsor. If they do not quite measure up to the works of Kandinsky, Franz Marc, or August Macke, in whose company they first appeared in the Blue Rider Exhibition of 1911, they are no embarrassment. Schoenberg understood that the fauvists (the Blue Rider painters were fauvists in all but nationality) had licensed amateurs like him to get in the pool and splash around. When he tries to do traditional pen-and-ink drawings, like his *Self-Portrait* of 1908, Schoenberg is more or less a klutz, but in a little while he's scrawling expressionistic daubs at the level of the late Philip Guston, and he brings off full-length portraits of his wife and of Alban Berg that would get him admitted to most art schools.

Kandinsky, of course, is mind candy, with the effervescence of those who are class president, most popular, most likely to succeed, and star quarterback all at once. He was also an incredible bully and blowhard (try any paragraph of his 1912 manifesto "On the Spiritual in Art"), but that is the price to be paid for genius.

The catalogue accompanying the show is notable not just for its excellent color plates and contextualizing essays but for a CD that replicates the 1911 Munich concert. Short of shaking the hands of all concerned, you can't get much closer to the original events. Seeing the show with its vistas of modernity in its happy springtide, one can only wish that the twentieth century had stopped right there.

Instead, alas, it continued on through two world wars and some dozen more revolutions in the arts, each less

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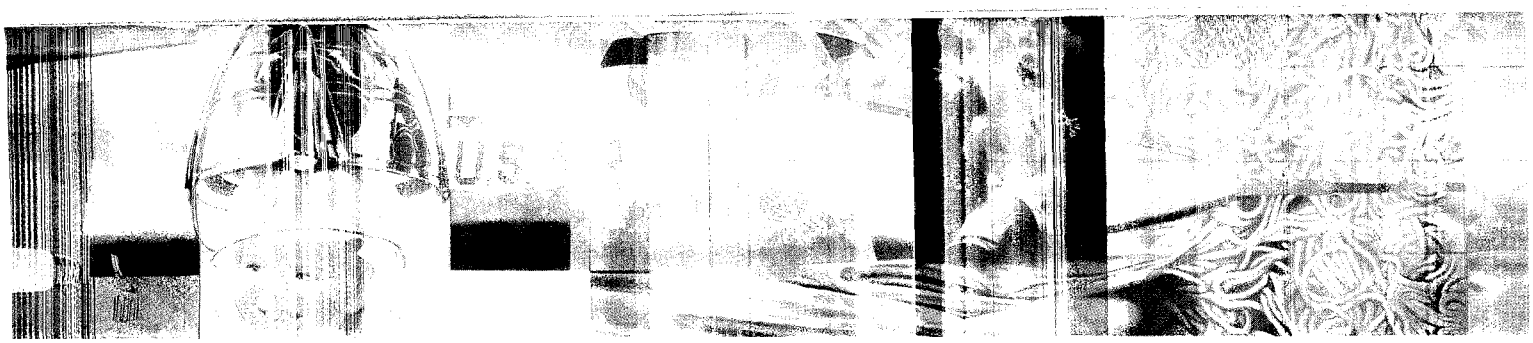

ve: James R[illegible]ist's [illegible] 965). Below: Wa[illegible]ly [illegible] Vate color with Red Spot (1913).

fruitful that the [illegible] own sorry and diminished moment. Or so it seems on the half-empty days of the new century, already at work on its own post-postmodern zeitgeist. On half-full days, both the past and future seem much brighter. With a bit of philosophy one can consign one's bêtes noires to their probable oblivion and take heart from seeing the good guys reap their eventual rewards. Arshile Gorky, for instance, whose whole life was a series of narrow squeaks and car crashes ending in suicide at age forty-four, and who, even so, achieved such mastery that the Whitney Museum is hosting a retrospective devoted exclusively to his drawings. And most deservedly, for Gorky was the drawing-master of the dawning age of abstract expressionism, who taught a clueless generation of apprentice draftsmen how to draw not from antique casts but directly from the collective unconscious.

The theory behind his freed-up drawing style derived from surrealism, one inflected by Picasso, not Dali, a style he appeared to have brought across the Atlantic with him when he escaped the Armenian genocides of his homeland as a teacher. As the skies of Europe continued to darken, Gorky showed himself to be an artistic prodigy in New York, exhibiting at the Museum of Modern Art in 1930, at age twenty-six. He would be recognized, along with Pollock and de Kooning, as one of the founding fathers of the new American style. Clement Greenberg saluted him in 1948 as "among the very few contemporary American painters whose work is of more than national importance." The Whitney's show, almost half a century later, confirms Greenberg's opinion. Within months he was immobilized by a car crash and took his life soon after.

Gorky was among the rare painters to take abstraction into the open seas of complete nonreferentiality while simultaneously offering surfaces and spaces of baroque complexity. The Whitney show and its excellent catalogue constitute a primer and pattern book for post-graduate students of drawing from the right side of the brain. De Kooning had the same knack but his concern was always more painterly. Gorky, like da Vinci, was a draftsman first and last, an anatomist of ectoplasmic bodies, a mapmaker of non-Euclidean lands.

If you go to museums for entertainment rather than instruction, you need only mount one flight of stairs to be a world—and three generations—away from Arshile Gorky. John Currin also achieved an early success on the art scene and didn't have to wait nearly as long as Gorky for his Whitney retrospective. At forty-one, Currin is the youngest certifiably important artist on the scene today—which has ticked off those of his elders who regard his paintings as retrograde and infra

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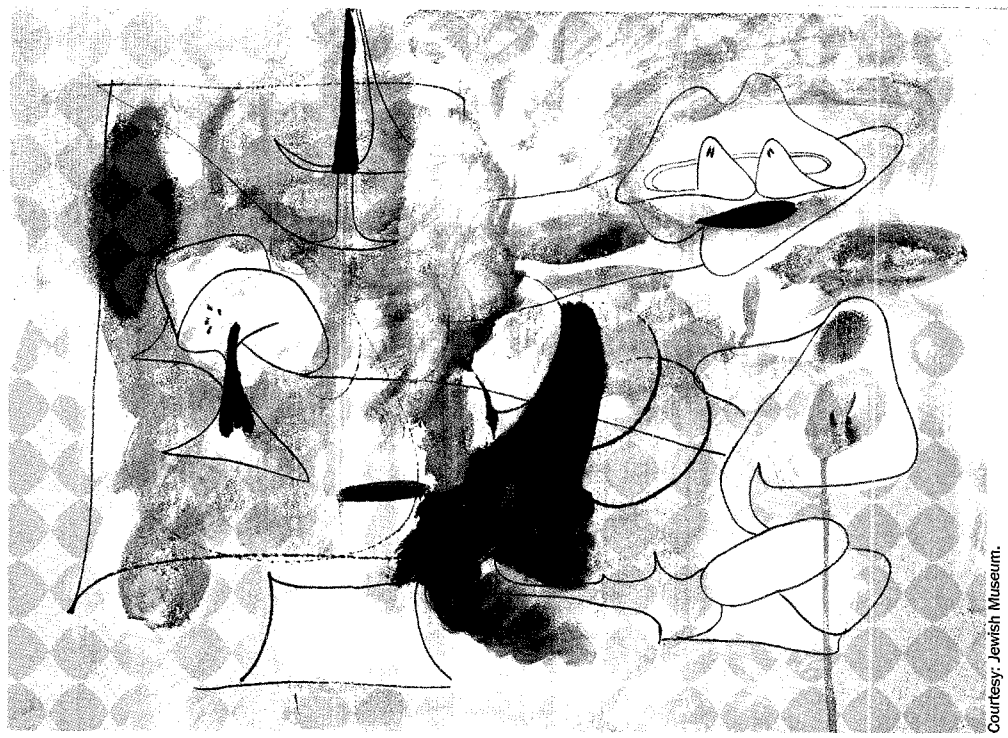
dig: all these paintings of anorectic, grimacing women, clothed and unclothed, the dorky men, the smug gays, the awful prettiness of everything, the intermittent slickness, surfaces that shift from cold cream to acne. Name a single respectable painter who paints like this!



Courtesy: Jewish Museum.

Above: Arshile Gorky's Untitled *(1945). Below: John Currin's* Heartless *(1997).*

Currin's Whitney catalogue references pictures by such déclassé painters as Norman Rockwell and the sci-fi illustrator Frank Frazetta. The women he paints are notable for breasts impossibly immense, contorted poses, long-lashed googly eyes, and an air of unconquerable niceness. He often goes to great lengths to give the flesh he paints the hues and textures of peaches in a high-resolution still-life; then, in the same picture, there is a face like a drunken dowager with Parkinson's disease. Each of these elements alone would have been a disqualification for exhibiting a painting within a one-mile radius of the Whitney; together, they are all that a cultivated taste should deplore. Their only conceivable excuse is that they are Bad Paintings aforethought.

Courtesy: Whitney Museum.

But that isn't it at all. Currin is repainting the history of art, not necessarily in chronological order. Just read his interview at the end of the catalogue for his own mission statement. Nothing painted is foreign to him, and if it seems relevant to the particular image he is working on, he'll try it on for size. It is the telling image that is his special knack, as it was Raphael's or Daumier's or Norman Rockwell's—a picture that stops you in your tracks like the gaze of Coleridge's wedding guest.

A case in point, *The Cripple* (1997): a skinny, well-breasted woman clenching a cane and smiling fiercely, her body contorted with a mad determination to be beautiful, a pin-up from purgatory. Impossible to look at the picture and not begin to plot the novel it would be the cover of. Hogarth did this sort of thing, as did Goya when he was off his leash, but well-bred painters head for the archetypes.

Often Currin's satiric intention is blatant, as when two fifty-eight-inch-busted women are shown measuring each other's endowments, but his more clever things (and they constitute a small throng) have a sideways thrust or a gratuitous, unfathomable silliness that doesn't yield to interpretation. His best figure studies are as fey and yet unproblematic as a Parmigianino (another Mannerist who liked to give his sitters some five or six extra vertebrae by way of enhancing their charms).

Mannerists, finally, are only interested in painting, the art itself, with all its illusory possibilities, technical challenges, and low vibrations. Does anyone really care what El Greco thought about the Holy Trinity? It's the way he makes it look like a launch from Cape Canaveral that keeps us coming back for more. With Currin, too, I'm sure I'll be back for more. ♦

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"Villains!" I shrieked, "dissemble no more! I admit the deed!—tear up the planks!—here, here!—It is the beating of his hideous heart!"

Books in Brief

***Loving Che* by Ana Menéndez (Grove/Atlantic, 227 pp., $22).** No question about it: Ernesto Che Guevara is the sexiest revolutionary of modern times. Executed October 8, 1967, by a drunken Bolivian army sergeant after he was captured while undertaking a singularly ill-organized attempt to carry revolution from the island of Cuba to the Latin American mainland, Che continues to adorn T-shirts, posters, and banners around the world.

Guevara has often been a hero in movies (once portrayed by Omar Sharif, of all people), most recently in a film adaptation of his youthful diary about a motorcycle trip around South America. Any number of novels over the years, all pretty mediocre, have featured him as a noble, deeply romantic figure, but no author surely has mooned so girlishly over him in print as has Ana Menéndez.

The daughter of Miami Cubans, Menéndez is a perfectly competent writer, not without talent in describing the Havana of today, but her holy icon turns to mush. She becomes the groupie incarnate: "the slip of his tongue like an island of madmen"; "He closes his eyes and draws me close, a great catch in his throat like a day's dying into night"; "His lips full and moist where palm trees grew and peasant women came to be filled."

The purported theme of *Loving Che* is a woman's quest for her mother, left behind in Cuba when she was an infant, and the discovery of letters and photographs that lead her to believe the sainted Che must have been her daddy. In case Menéndez felt her words alone would not suffice to convey to readers the special magical potency of the man, photographs of Guevara are scattered throughout the text, most culled from the Cuban magazine *Bohemia*, showing the Argentine adventurer in the initial years of Castro's reign. And yes, he does indeed look a dashing devil.

Perhaps aware of her fawning-schoolgirl tone, periodically she reminds her readers about his odor: "his smell overtakes me again: mountain and dirt and unwashed skin and heat," and "the man who is only warm, smelling of moss ground, . . . his skin tacky to the touch with dried sweat."

Of course, maybe the woman just likes smelly men. If readers' memories extend to a little more of Guevara—his call from the Bolivian backcountry, for instance, demanding "Two, three, many Vietnams"—they may be less inclined to recollect Che as lovingly as does Ana Menéndez.

—Cynthia Grenier

***Day Care Deception: What the Child Care Establishment Isn't Telling Us* by Brian C. Robertson (Encounter, 222 pp., $25.95).** In his carefully researched *Day Care Deception*, Robertson explores what happens when childrearing is placed in the hands of the government. Arguing against subsidizing commercial day care, he claims that "most families would prefer to balance work and home in a way that would allow them to be more engaged with the raising of their children, not less."

Along the way, Robertson recounts the history of the child-care movement, beginning with the Lanham Act of 1941, which funded centers for the children of female defense workers. In the late 1960s, radical feminists began to supplant the "maternalist" feminists who had once fought to ensure that the children of fathers who were unable to support their family could still be cared for by their mothers at home. By the mid-1990s, conservatives were suffering from what Robertson calls "political schizophrenia" on child-care issues.

Perhaps most startling is the way feminist academics censor research on the detrimental effects of day care. Some even admit their research is influenced by a hope for results that won't make working moms feel guilty.

In *Day Care Deception*, Robertson asks whether we should fund day-care centers or make it easier for parents to be parents. For the sake of healthy children, it must be the parents.

—Erin Montgomery

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High 23, Low 14
Tomorrow: *Darker.*
High 19, Low 8.

Details, Page **B8**

127TH SELF-IMPORTANT YEAR, No. 56

DC MD VA

Parody

Bush: Test Congress For Steroid Use, Too

By AGANDA MASTON
Washington Post Staff Writer

After making the fight against steroid abuse in professional sports the centerpiece of his State of the Union address, President George Bush today called for random drug testing for members of Congress.

"Just like pro athletes, members of the House and Senate are role models for America's youngsters," said Bush. "Everyone wants to be like Tom Daschle, Ted Kennedy, Hillary Clinton or Nancy Pelosi. Therefore, it is incumbent upon Congress to take the lead, to send the right signal, to get tough and to get rid of steroids now."

An unnamed senior administration official said the president has long believed that "some folks on 'the Hill' display frequent irritability and aggression," classic symptoms of anabolic steroid abuse.

Under the president's proposal, federal lawmakers will periodically submit urine samples to an independent screening commission. The commission will give no advance notice when a legislator is randomly selected, and the member must immediately leave the chamber and submit to the testing, "even if he's in the middle of filibustering a conservative judicial nominee."

If the program proves successful, it could be expanded to pre-screen candidates for office.

"It's really scary to see Howard Dean's neck swell to twice the width of his skull when he emits that Jurassic screech," said the official. "America needs pre-emptive testing. We can't wait until the threat is imminent."

See HARDBODIES, *A5, Col.1*

Newly ripped-and-ready Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) is one of several prominent Hill figures targeted for randomly scheduled steroids testing.

D.C. Murders Drop to Just Several a Day

By F. D. MAURICE
Post Staff Writer

a 1993 peak of one killing every 103 minutes to a current rate of just one each five

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the weekly Standard
FEBRUARY 2, 2004

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Education in [illegible]

Chester E. Finn Jr. is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution; chairman of Hoover's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education; and president of the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

There was good news, [illegible] troubling nonsense as [illegible] in the December [illegible] 7, 2003, release of scores for ten big cities in fourth- and eighth-grade reading and math on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

The good news is that major urban school systems are willingly participating in NAEP, allowing their results to be held up for public inspection, and submitting to comparisons that can be harsh as well as revealing.

The bad news is that most students in these cities' systems performed dismally. In fourth-grade math, in only three of the ten jurisdictions did the percentage of kids scoring in NAEP's "proficient" range rise above the teens—and in just one did it beat the national average. In eighth-grade reading, at least two-fifths of the students were "below basic" in seven cities. In the six lowest-scoring cities, the percentages of reading-proficient eighth graders were grim: Chicago 15 percent, Houston 14 percent, Atlanta 11 percent, Los Angeles 11 percent, District of Columbia 10 percent, Cleveland 10 percent.

This shows that **Washington's ambitious goal of getting every young American to the "proficient" level is akin to crossing the Grand Canyon**, calling for heroic action on many fronts. Why, then, is the chairman of NAEP's governing board saying something different? An architect of the vaunted Texas education reforms, Darvin M. Winick is known for his reformist zeal. But not this time.

First he asserted that "the perception that students in urban schools do less well than others [illegible] performance is not supported by the 2003 NAEP results." This is simply wrong. Their academic performance, by and large, is horrendous. And with rare exceptions, they do notably worse than the national average. Why encourage complacency in big-city school districts just when they need to struggle harder with painful reforms?

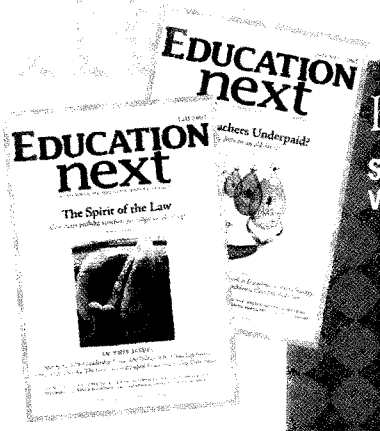
Winick turned next to the presentation of test results by race, noting (correctly) that minority youngsters "meet or exceed national averages" for students of the same race in some cities. OK, it's good to know that urban kids do no worse than same-race children elsewhere. But then he made this regrettable assertion: "When demographics and family economics are considered, students in the participating urban districts, on the average, are not too different from other students across the nation. The common perception that students in urban public schools do not achieve is not supported by the NAEP results."

The fact is that huge numbers of urban (and nonurban) youngsters in America are *not* achieving anywhere near satisfactorily—and that should be the main message. Moreover, at a time when our premier education goal is to close race-related achievement gaps, it is bizarre to settle for academic outcomes adjusted for "demographics and family economics." Such statements imply that poor and minority kids ought not be expected to attain proficiency and that we should be content if those in our big cities do as well (that is, as poorly) as similar kids elsewhere in the land.

Troubling nonsense, indeed.

— Chester E. Finn Jr.

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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